100 DOCUMENTS ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WAR

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Third Chapter

Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the German people has learnt to look not backward into the past, but forward into the future. But the war which has been enforced upon us, and which we are waging for the sake of Germany's future weal, renders it absolutely necessary that we should constantly bear in mind what led to the outbreak of the present conflict and wherein lay its ultimate causes. These facts have long been obvious to those who cared to see them and have often enough been publicly established by competent German authorities and especially by the Fuehrer in his speeches. Since, however, our enemies are untiring in their efforts to conceal the truth by means of lying propaganda and to mislead the world at large, not only as regards the causes of the war but also concerning their aims, it seems essential to furnish once again by authentic official documents the irrefutable proof that Britain, and Britain alone, was responsible for the war which she deliberately brought about in order to annihilate Germany.

Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, the German Foreign Office published, in the form of a White Paper, those documents which shed a light upon the last phase of the German-Polish crisis. The Foreign Office now publishes a more comprehensive collection of documents relating not only to the period immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities, but to the most important political events which gave rise to the conflict with Poland in the first place, and subsequently, to the conflict with Britain and France.

The 100 documents here published are so eloquent in themselves that comment is superfluous. These matter-of-fact diplomatic papers give a plain and unadorned picture of the political developments of the past few years, a picture which cannot fail to arouse, even in those closely connected with these developments, a feeling of overwhelming tragedy. They prove how, since the conclusion of the Great War, the Poles systematically attempted to exterminate the German minority in Poland and to ruin Danzig; they prove how the Fuehrer endeavoured by broad-minded and infinitely patient statesmanship to establish German-Polish relations on a permanent footing to the interests of both parties; they prove how, on the contrary, the people in power in Poland in their short-sightedness frustrated the possibilities of a final settlement again and again offered to them by Germany. Above all, the documents clearly show how, immediately after the Munich Conference, Britain's desire for war became more and more obvious and how the British Government finally utilized the infatuation of the Polish Government, which Britain herself had brought about on purpose, in order to start their long-planned war with Germany. To reveal the full extent of Britain's political hypocrisy and criminal machinations it would, indeed, be necessary to recount the events of the entire post-war period, throughout which Britain opposed every successive attempt on the part of Germany to free herself from the fetters imposed on her by the dictated Treaty of Versailles and again and again spoilt every opportunity for the revision of this dictated treaty by means of negotiation. A study of the short period which has elapsed since the autumn of 1938, viewed in the light of the documents published in this White Book will, however, suffice to prove that Britain was, from the outset, determined to thwart the Fuehrer in his purpose by force. He had already by his supreme statesmanship succeeded in doing away with several of the worst crimes committed at Versailles, and that without bloodshed and without impinging

upon the interests of Great Britain. In the same way, the Fuehrer would have obtained a peaceful solution of the German-Polish problem, had not Britain made unscrupulous use of Poland as a pawn in her schemes for war and by her criminal policy plunged Europe into war.

This truth, historically established for all time, is further borne out by the fact that Britain replied to the final and generous peace offer made once again by the Fuehrer in his speech in the Reichstag on 6 October by an arrogant and insulting challenge to Germany. In unshakeable consciousness of the righteousness of their cause and with the unswerving conviction of their ultimate victory, the people of Germany took up the challenge and will not lay down their arms until they have achieved their aim. This aim is:—The military annihilation of their adversaries and the securement of the German nation's rightful living space against the threat of aggression for all time.

Berlin, 3 December 1939.

von Ribbentrop

Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Foreword

The following documents have been published with the object of giving a clear picture of the events which led up to the outbreak of the present war. They relate not only to the weeks immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities but allow the reader to form an unbiassed opinion with regard to the more remote causes of the war.

The White Book published by the German Foreign Office (1939, No. 2) entitled "Documents on the Origin of the War" contains no less than 482 documents. It was necessary, in order to give a really comprehensive survey not only of the development of German-Polish relations, but also of Britain's war policy and the German-Polish crisis of 1939, to publish an unbroken series of official documents. A great number of the documents contained in the above-mentioned publication need not, however, be referred to by those who merely wish to gain a general impression of the most important political events. The present edition is, therefore, a selection of those sections of the official White Book dealing with the origin of the war, which most clearly show the main trend of political developments. This handy edition of the German documents on the origin of the war affords every reader an opportunity of speedily familiarizing himself with the most important facts which led to the outbreak of the present conflict. The contents of those documents which do not appear in this edition are summarized in the connecting text, which thus gives a clear and accurate picture of the course of events.

In the first chapter, the documents show the development of German-Polish relations from the Versailles Conference to the time preceding the Munich Agreement. The second chapter deals with the development of British war policy, namely, the encirclement of Germany and the incitement of Poland and also the endeavour of the Reich Government to reach a peaceful settlement of the problems of Danzig and the Polish Corridor. The third chapter shows how Poland became the instrument of Britain's will to war. The effects of the British guarantee can be observed in the campaign to exterminate the German minority in Poland. This is followed by the last phase of the German-Polish crisis, in which British policy led to the outbreak of hostilities.

(The figures in brackets indicate the number of the document in the official German White Book.)

FIRST CHAPTER

Development of German-Polish Relations

A. The Versailles Conference and the Polish Problem

Since the day at Versailles when Poland was reconstituted an independent state, German-Polish relations have been under a cloud. In the first instance, Poland declared herself Germany's hereditary enemy according to an alleged thousand-year-old tradition. She thus established not only her territorial claims with regard to Germany, but even justified her own right of existence and recommended herself to the victorious Powers as a potential and reliable ally who could be called upon at any time to assist in holding Germany in check. Secondly, this function on the part of Poland was confirmed by the Western Powers, and by inclusion in the French system of collective security she became the eastern link in the encirclement of Germany, destined since their failure to secure Russia to assume that country's rôle and carry on the tradition that Germany's attention should be divided between two fronts. Thirdly, German-Polish relations were embittered from the outset by the transfer to Polish rule of a large body of Germans who were forthwith subjected to strict Polonization. Fourthly, the cession of German territory in the east was one of the greatest injustices of the Peace Treaty. Not only the German nation but competent statesmen among the Allies regarded these cessions as so intolerable that everyone agreed that this was a matter for immediate reparation, if it were not to be the cause of another European war.

In a memorandum addressed to the Versailles Conference on 25 March 1919, Mr. Lloyd George drew attention to this

potential cause of future conflict, as did also the German Peace Delegation.

No. 1 (1)

Extract from a Memorandum circulated by Mr. Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, 25 March 1919

"Some considerations for the Peace Conference before they finally draft their terms"

.... The maintenance of peace will then depend upon there being no causes of exasperation constantly stirring up the spirit of patriotism, of justice or of fair play. To achieve redress our terms may be severe, they may be stern and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain. But injustice, arrogance, displayed in the hour of triumph will never be forgotten or forgiven.

For these reasons I am, therefore, strongly averse to transferring more Germans from German rule to the rule of some other nation than can possibly be helped. I cannot conceive any greater cause of future war than that the German people, who have certainly proved themselves one of the most vigorous and powerful races in the world, should be surrounded by a number of small states, many of them consisting of people who have never previously set up a stable government for themselves, but each of them containing large masses of Germans clamouring for reunion with their native land. The proposal of the Polish Commission that we should place 2,100,000 Germans under the control of a people which is of a different religion and which has never proved its capacity for stable self-government throughout its history must, in my judgment, lead sooner or later to a new war in the East of Europe....

No. 2 (2)

*Extract from the Observations of the German Peace Delegation on the Peace Conditions, 29 May 1919**

(Translation)

By the settlement of the territorial questions in the east as provided for in Articles 27 and 28, portions of the Prussian provinces of East and West Prussia, Pomerania, Posen and Silesia more or less considerable in area, which are not inhabited by an undeniably Polish population, are allocated to the Polish State. Without considering the ethnographical aspect of the case, numerous German cities and large areas of purely German territory are being handed over to Poland merely in order that Poland should possess suitable military frontiers against Germany or important railway junctions. Districts which at various times during centuries have been separated from Poland or over which Poland never ruled, are now being indiscriminately allotted to her. The acceptance of the suggested settlement would therefore signify a violation of large and undeniably German districts. Such a settlement would, moreover, be contrary to the Wilsonian principle that in settling national questions care must be exercised to avoid "introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world" ....

* *Annex to the Note addressed by the President of the German Peace Delegation at Versailles to the President of the Versailles Conference on 29 May 1919.*

No. 3 (13)

*Extract from the Observations of the German Peace Delegation on the Peace Conditions, 29 May 1919**

(Translation)

.... The surrender of the purely German Hanseatic town of Danzig and of its equally purely German surroundings as

demanded in Articles 100 to 108 is a particularly glaring contravention of all the assurances given in President Wilson's declarations. The census taken in Danzig on 1 December 1910 showed that Danzig had a negligible Polish-speaking minority of 3.5 per cent., the Danzig Niederung district one of 1 per cent., the Marienburg district one of 3 per cent., even the Danzig Höhe district one of only 11 per cent. The Poles themselves do not seriously contest the fact that Danzig has always been German in character. An attempt to convert Danzig into a free city, to hand over its transport system and the external representation of its rights to the Polish State would call forth violent opposition and a permanent state of war in Eastern Europe. The economic measures moreover are so arranged that every possible obstacle is placed in the way of traffic between Danzig and Germany—obviously with the intention of the ultimate Polonization of this purely German territory by means of economic pressure. The German Government are therefore forced to reject the intended violation of Danzig's nationality and to demand that Danzig and the surrounding territory be left to the German Reich. — — —

* *Annex to the Note addressed by the President of the German Peace Delegation at Versailles to the President of the Versailles Conference, dated 29 May 1919.*

Even M. Clemenceau, President of the Supreme Council, in his well-known letter to M. Paderewski dated 24 June 1919, pointed out to the Poles the obligations implied by the handing over of large groups of minorities and made the signing and observance of a Treaty for the Protection of Minorities the condition on which Poland was to receive the German territories. This at the same time constituted a solemn obligation on the part of the Allied Powers to secure the observance by Poland of this charter concerning the German and other minorities in Poland. The wording of the Treaty leaves no

room for doubt as to what responsibilities Poland agreed to assume with regard to the non-Polish inhabitants of the new State, who represented over 40 per cent. of the total population. The history of German-Polish relations from 1919 onwards is, however, as the documents here published show, a story of continual infringement of this treaty by the Poles and at the same time a story of the silent complicity of the League of Nations and the guarantor Powers. As far back as 20 November 1920, the German Government were forced to cast aside their reserve and send a comprehensive complaint to the Polish Government. It was stated therein that "Germans were treated as outlaws in Poland." This complaint was as unsuccessful as the numerous complaints and representations made by representatives of the German minority in Poland itself.

The Polish Government made it clear that they considered themselves in no wise bound by the obligations for the protection of the minorities which they had so solemnly undertaken. On 10 April 1923, for instance, General Sikorski, who was then Premier, speaking in public, announced the Government's programme as "the liquidation of German estates and the de-Germanization of the western 'voivodeships'" and proceeded to indulge in cutting remarks directed against Danzig. By the middle of 1923 the expulsion of the Germans had already assumed extraordinary proportions. Polish measures against German land-owners, which, for example, the Permanent Court of International Justice, in its advisory opinion given on 10 September 1923, designated as "not in conformity with the international obligations of the Polish Government," still further increased the compulsion to emigrate. In September 1931 it was admitted in Polish quarters that some million Germans had already been ousted from Poland. Neither the guarantor Powers nor the League of Nations, to which not only the German, but also the Ukrainian minority had mean-

time made repeated appeals for protection against the continued infringement of the provisions of the Minorities Treaty by Poland, fulfilled their obligations.

The Polonizing policy was likewise immediately directed against the Free City of Danzig. The German Peace Delegation's protest against the severance of Danzig from the Reich, although based on President Wilson's declarations, had proved in vain. From the outset Poland regarded the new status in Danzig merely as a preparatory condition for making the city definitely Polish. Poland set up twenty-four authorities in Danzig, each of which she regarded as a Polish nucleus capable of development. A report by the High Command of the German Army at the conclusion of the war with Poland shows that the more important of these authorities had been developed into military bases. The Free City of Danzig was constantly forced to appeal to the League Commissioner, as also to the Council of the League of Nations against action on the part of Poland. By the abuse of privileges granted her at Versailles with regard to Danzig and principally by the exercise of economic pressure, Poland endeavoured from the outset to force Danzig to subjugate its interests to her own, nor did she hesitate to violate the sovereign rights of the Free City of Danzig in cases where such pressure seemed unavailing. Whilst Poland endeavoured by every means in her power to usurp for herself a better footing in Danzig, she succeeded in most seriously damaging the trade of the port of Danzig by the construction of a rival Polish harbour at Gdynia which was granted unilateral privileges.

Germany's adversaries in the Great War who had been responsible for the establishment of the Polish State soon realized that the continual violations of the law perpetrated by Poland against the German minority within her frontiers and against Danzig, constituted a serious threat to the peace of Europe. This feeling was expressed in numerous statements

made by leading British politicians, in debates in the House of Commons and in various publications. Mr. Winston Churchill, for example, speaking in the House of Commons in November 1932 advocated "the removal of the just grievances of the vanquished" and emphasized in particular the "Danzig Corridor." "Otherwise" he averred, "we might find ourselves pledged in honour and in law to enter a war against our will, and against our better judgment, in order to preserve those very injustices and grievances which sunder Europe to-day." But nothing was done to alter matters while yet there was time, and by the time that the National-Socialist Government came into power in Germany, conditions had become more and more critical.

B. Germany's Efforts to come to an Understanding with Poland 1933 to 1939

Immediately after coming into power, the Fuehrer, in order to ensure peace with neighbouring states and thus to secure the peace of Europe, resolved to place Germany's relations with Poland upon an entirely new footing and with this end in view, to come to an understanding with Poland. His efforts to reach an understanding began in May 1933 and continued until the end of August 1939. A few documents selected from the abundant material extant bear witness to Germany's efforts to reach an understanding.

No. 4 (26)

Memo by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning a conversation of the Fuehrer with the Polish Minister

(Translation)

Berlin, 2 May 1933

This morning the Reich Chancellor in my presence received the Polish Minister who on behalf of his Government pointed out that since the National-Socialist Party had come into

power in Germany a growing uneasiness had manifested itself in Poland which had at times almost amounted to panic. The Minister emphasized Poland's interest in a free outlet to the sea which no Polish Government could ever again renounce. For this reason Poland was compelled to maintain her title to Danzig, and he had been instructed to obtain an assurance from the Chancellor that Germany had no intentions of altering the present status in Danzig.

The Chancellor replied to M. Wysocki by stating that, in the first place, he was forced to deny that Poland had any particular claim to Danzig. If uneasiness prevailed in Poland, he could only say that there was definitely greater reason for such uneasiness in Germany where there was a continual sense of being threatened on account of events in Upper Silesia, the concentration of troops on the frontier and the occupation of the Westerplatte in Danzig. Owing to the short-sightedness of statesmen, malevolence and lack of insight, the frontier between Germany and Poland had been fixed in such a way that as long as this demarcation held good, a peaceful coexistence of the two peoples was practically inconceivable. He respected every nationality and regarded Poland as an actuality which he was fully prepared to acknowledge. But at the same time he demanded that Poland for her part should treat Germany as an actuality. If, at the time when the Treaty of Versailles was signed, people had not been wholly unable to think clearly, Poland herself ought never to have consented to the establishment of a corridor through German territory, for it was obvious that such a corridor would inevitably give rise to a continual state of tension between Germany and Poland. It would have been much wiser to have chosen the outlet to the sea, to which the Minister had referred as an inalienable right on Poland's part, on the other side of East Prussia. Had that been done, friendly relations would long have existed between Germany and Poland and there would also have been a

possibility of an economic understanding. He, the Chancellor, only hoped that the political questions still pending between Germany and Poland would one day be investigated and dealt with dispassionately by the statesmen of both countries. He was convinced that a way out of the present intolerable situation could then be found. Germany wanted peace. He was far from intending to expropriate Polish territory by force. He reserved the right, however, to vindicate the rights to which he was entitled by virtue of treaty at any time and as he thought fit...

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 5 (33)

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs to the German Minister in Warsaw
Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, 24 November 1933

The Reich Chancellor agrees to the draft of a German-Polish declaration as already handed over to you in person here*. The Chancellor further agrees that you should hand this draft in audience to Marshal Pilsudski on behalf of the Reich Chancellor. Please make immediate formal application for this audience and press for a speedy fixing of the date.

Please observe the following lines in what you say at the audience: The Chancellor sincerely thanks the Marshal for his greetings which he reciprocates. He has welcomed with satisfaction the attitude adopted by the Marshal, with whose views he is in complete accord as is clear from the press *communiqué*** agreed upon. The Chancellor thinks it advisable not to let matters rest after the publication of this *communiqué*, but to find a way in which the ideas and aims of

both Governments could be more clearly specified and have greater political weight. He had therefore instructed you to hand the Marshal a draft of a declaration such as might be made by both Governments with the object of achieving the aim desired. To explain the wording adopted in this draft you should point out that the Chancellor thinks it advisable not to use traditional outworn phrases and formulas which are already somewhat trite, but to choose instead a form which would make the political decision of the two Governments absolutely clear and would make a deeper impression on the public than the usual form of pact which is less esteemed nowadays than formerly. You should, however, emphasize in this connection that the form chosen in the draft in no way affects the binding nature of the terms to be agreed upon, as can be seen from the fact that provision is made at the end for ratification.

For your information I should like to point out that the wording of the declaration as suggested by us in no way implies the recognition of Germany's existing eastern frontiers, but states on the contrary that by the medium of this declaration a basis shall be created for the solution of all problems, i. e. also territorial problems.

Neurath

* *The reference is to a preliminary draft of the Declaration of 26 January 1934, published under No. 7 (37).*

** *The text of the* communiqué *is as follows:—*

"This morning the Reich Chancellor received the Polish Minister who called on him for the first time. The discussion concerning German-Polish relations revealed the complete agreement of both Governments to tackle questions affecting both countries by means of direct negotiations and to renounce any resort to force in their mutual relations."

No. 6 (34)

The German Minister in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office
Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, 28 November 1933

Audience with Marshal Piludski took place this afternoon. The conversation, at which M. Beck, Foreign Minister, was present and which lasted about an hour and a quarter, was of a definitely friendly character and indeed the extraordinary speed with which, considering the usual custom here, the date of the audience was fixed, can be regarded as a special mark of attention.

The Marshal who, in conversation, is inclined to deviate from the subject under discussion and indulge in personal reminiscences, mostly of a military nature, gives the impression of a man intellectually alert but prematurely old and almost infirm in body. Characteristic of his fundamental attitude towards the questions under discussion were his repeated expressions of friendly appreciation of the personality of the Reich Chancellor whose genuine desire for peace he frequently emphasized in the course of the conversation.

I began by conveying the Chancellor's greetings which Pilsudski received with evident satisfaction. After having explained, according to your instructions, the form of the "declaration" chosen by us, I read it aloud in German at the Marshal's request and supplemented this by explanations in French, with which language he is better acquainted.

Pilsudski signified his agreement with the fundamental ideas of the German proposal. Using his own characteristically drastic mode of expression, he approved in particular of the choice of a new form for the declaration in which the absence of paragraphs, which he evidently detests, especially

appealed to him. He was careful however to infer that traditional formulas and paragraphs sometimes had their uses. He declared that he was naturally not in a position to express an opinion with regard to details in the draft, but that he wished already at this juncture to mention a particular point about which he was doubtful, namely the reference to the Locarno Treaty of Arbitration which was regarded with disfavour in Poland. Concerning future procedure the Marshal explained at some length what different persons should be asked to examine and give their opinion on the draft and pointed out repeatedly that this would occupy a considerable time. In the further course of the conversation, Marshal Pilsudski emphasized that he also wished to put German-Polish relations on a friendly and neighbourly basis, but stressed with a bluntness which I have as yet hardly observed among Polish politicians, that the hostility of the Polish people to the Germans, which dates back to time immemorial, would give rise to grave difficulties in carrying out this policy. Consequently, this policy must not be based on sentiment but solely upon common-sense considerations. I contradicted his assertion that the position in Germany was similar and emphasized with particular reference to recent incidents the necessity for the initiation of a systematic policy of *rapprochement,* such as had already been instituted with success by Germany, e. g. with regard to the press. Pilsudski replied to my remarks by expressing his infinite contempt for the press, with which he wished to have nothing to do, but he admitted that something could be gained by influencing political organizations.

In conclusion I mentioned the Chancellor's desire to achieve normal relations in economic matters also. Pilsudski replied that formerly only one Minister in the Polish Cabinet had opposed the customs war, whereas to-day it would be difficult to find a single Minister who was in favour of continuing this wretched war. Poland, having weathered the economic

crisis despite the fact that she had no reserves, was however obliged to seek a settlement which was economically justifiable.

Moltke

Germany's efforts, which found a ready supporter in the person of that great Polish statesman, Marshal Pilsudski, who was also desirous of coming to an understanding with his western neighbour, appeared to meet with success. On 26 January 1934, a mutual Declaration was made which seemed destined to place the relations of the two States and the two peoples on a new footing.

No. 7 (37)

Declaration made by the German and the Polish Governments, 26 January 1934

(Translation)

The German Government and the Polish Government consider that the time has come to introduce a new phase in the political relations between Germany and Poland by direct understanding between State and State. They have, therefore, decided in the present declaration to lay down the principles for the future development of these relations.

The two Governments base their action on the fact that the maintenance and safeguarding of a lasting peace between their countries is an essential prerequisite for the general peace of Europe. They have therefore decided to base their mutual relations on the principles laid down in the Pact of Paris of 27 August 1928 and propose to define more exactly the application of these principles in so far as the relations between Germany and Poland are concerned.

Each of the two Governments, therefore, establish that the international obligations already respectively undertaken by them towards a third party do not hinder the peaceful development of their mutual relations, do no conflict with the present Declaration and are not affected by this Declara-

tion. They establish, moreover, that this Declaration does not extend to those questions which under International Law are to be regarded exclusively as the internal concern of one of the two States.

Both Governments announce their intention to settle directly all questions of whatever sort which concern their mutual relations. Should any disputes arise between them and agreement thereon not be reached by direct negotiations, they will in each particular case, on the basis of mutual agreement, seek a solution by other peaceful means, without prejudice to the possibility of applying, if necessary, those methods of procedure which in the event of such cases arising are provided for in other agreements in force between them. In no circumstances, however, will they resort to force in order to reach a decision in such disputes.

The guarantee of peace created by these principles will facilitate the great task of both Governments of finding solutions for problems of a political, economic or cultural nature based on equitable and fair adjustment of the interests of both parties.

Both Governments are convinced that the relations between their countries will in this way develop fruitfully, and will lead to their becoming good neighbours, a result which will contribute not only to the well-being of their own countries, but also to that of the other peoples of Europe.

The present Declaration shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Warsaw as soon as possible. The Declaration is valid for a period of ten years, reckoned from the day of the exchange of the instruments of ratification. If the declaration is not denounced by one of the two Governments six months before the expiration of this period it will continue in force, but can then be denounced by either Government at any time on notice of six months being given.

Done in two original documents in the German and Polish languages respectively.

Berlin, 26 January 1934.

For the German Government:
C. Freiherr von Neurath

For the Polish Government:
Józef Lipski

This solemn Declaration expressed the intention of both Governments to solve all questions affecting their relations by means of bilateral diplomatic negotiations, without resorting to force and without the intervention of a third party. It was hoped that on the basis of such good-neighbourly relations, a solution could be found "for problems of a political, economic or cultural nature". This agreement related, therefore, to the settlement of problems but was not intended to perpetuate the existing status quo *between Germany and Poland.*

Expectations that this agreement would place the relations between the two states and the two peoples on a new and productive footing were doomed to early disappointment.

The hope that the German-Polish Declaration would lead to an improvement in the treatment of the German minority in Poland and would consitute a rule for the attitude of the Polish authorities towards the German minority was soon shattered. Assuming that Germany and the German Press would remain silent in accordance with the spirit of the friendly agreement, the Polish Government under cover of this very agreement began a campaign with the object of ridding themselves of the German minority by underhand methods, the only obstacle in their path being the merely formal supervision in connection with the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities. On 13 September 1934, Poland, therefore, notified the League of Nations Assembly that she would

cease to co-operate with the League in the execution of the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities. In reply to German reservations with regard to this step, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs expressly declared that the rights of the minorities would, in future, be protected as hitherto by the Polish constitution.

This statement was, however, not in accordance with facts. The campaign to exterminate the German minority was continued by means of Agrarian Reform, dismissal of workers, limitation of cultural activities, boycotting measures and acts of terror. The German-Polish press truce was not observed. German representatives in Poland were forced to report that the friendly agreement had brought with it no improvement but that, on the contrary, the situation was becoming steadily worse.

No. 8 (73)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with M. Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs
Memo

(Translation)

Berlin, 20 January 1937

M. Beck, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited me this morning, whilst passing through Berlin on his way to Geneva, and we took occasion to discuss, amongst other things, the attitude of the Polish Press.

I drew M. Beck's attention to the fact that even a large part of the Polish Press which is inspired by the Government has been, during the last few months, writing in a way very unfriendly towards Germany. I stated that we had imposed upon the German Press the duty of remaining very reserved in regard to this unfriendly tone, but that I would request him to use his influence with a view to causing this section of the Polish Press to change its tone. This matter evidently

caused M. Beck embarrassment and he endeavoured to excuse the matters objected to on the ground of internal political difficulties in Poland.

Frhr. von Neurath

In the spring of 1937, Germany, in view of the impending expiration of the Geneva Convention relating to Upper Silesia (which ensured the population on either side of the frontier certain facilities for a transition period of fifteen years), made an effort to secure a bilateral minorities agreement with Poland. Poland, however, twice rejected such a suggestion, being of the opinion that it would constitute a limitation of her sovereign rights. In view of this, Germany was prepared to be satisfied with an identic declaration made simultaneously by each Government in place of a formal agreement. In this connection, the German Ambassador in Warsaw submitted the following report to the German Foreign Office: —

Nr. 9 (88)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office
Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, 1 June 1937

I visited M. Beck to-day and made the *démarche* which you instructed me to make and handed to him the attached Memorandum which I also thoroughly explained verbally. M. Beck listened very attentively but showed during my remarks signs neither of agreement nor disagreement. When I in conclusion pointed out that my instructions from Herr von Neurath had been ordered by the Fuehrer and Chancellor, M. Beck showed signs of being obviously impressed and repeated that desires of the Fuehrer were always certain to receive particularly serious consideration in Warsaw, and he would, of course, immediately submit to the Premier or to the Cabinet the matter which

I had brought to his notice, and would therefore wait in order to make known in the near future the attitude of the Polish Government.

For the rest M. Beck confined himself to a few short observations in which he first of all stated that as a matter of fact our considerate behaviour on the occasion of the action taken by the Polish Government at Geneva in the autumn of 1934, had given rise at the time to great satisfaction in Warsaw. M. Beck then added a few words of defence in regard to my statements concerning the actual situation of the German minority in Poland but did not go into details and stated that in the event of arbitrary action on the part of subordinate authorities, the Premier would certainly be prepared to intervene in his characteristically energetic manner. M. Beck tried to explain the difficulties connected with the whole German-Polish minorities problem as being a result of the difference in the internal structure of the two States, for in his opinion the whole minorities problem was extraordinarily complicated. M. Beck did not repeat his previous arguments against our proposal but on the other hand did not utter a single word about the fundamental points of view, which I had according to my instructions put before him.

von Moltke

In the Memorandum to which reference is made in the report, the Reich Government expressed their disappointment at Poland's rejection of the German proposals. If the Polish Government declined formal procedure and treaties in their accepted form, esteeming such of little value from the point of view of the minorities themselves, and preferred to come to a friendly understanding with regard to any individual problems which might arise, the German Government were, to a certain extent, entirely in agreement with this point of view, but pointed out that it was difficult to dispense with a general fundamental agreement with regard to the treatment of such a vital problem. They, therefore, suggested an identic

public declaration to be made by the two Governments regarding the protection of the German and the Polish minorities respectively, domiciled within their territories. The Memorandum goes on to say: —

Extract from the Memorandum of the Reich with regard to the German-Polish Minorities problem, 1 June 1937

5. In addition to the previously indicated points of view which arise out of questions of principle, and even more urgently than these, the development of the actual situation of the German minority in Poland demands that an understanding be arrived at between the two Governments on the whole minorities problem. It is in this actual situation of the German minority that the German Government regret to see an incontrovertible argument against the Polish theory that the minority would fare best if the local authorities were left free to deal with it at their own unrestricted discretion. As a matter of fact, our observations for a long time and particularly during the last year have left no doubt that a systematic attempt is being made with the support of state departments and of private organizations encouraged by the authorities to shatter the economic foundations of the German minority in Poland and to cause all those who admit to being Germans to change their attitude in this respect.

6. It is not intended at this stage to enter into a discussion of details. However, in order that the German complaint may not appear to be vague or not substantiated we would draw attention to the following points:—

(a) the disproportionate subjection of German estates to the process of expropriation in accordance with Agrarian Reform, as carried out particularly last year;

(b) the intensified Polonization of German estates, which have been for generations in the possession of Germans,

by application of the law of repurchase and priority purchase;

(*c*) the interpretation of the legislation applying to the frontier zone*, which is in fact also being particularly directed against the Germans;

(*d*) the fact that for some time past persons belonging to the German minority have only in exceptional cases received permission from the authorities to open shops, businesses, and trading and industrial undertakings, and that doctors, chemists, and lawyers of German birth are being caused the greatest difficulties by the authorities in the establishment of a practice;

(*e*) the likewise obvious fact that German employees and workmen are dismissed owing to pressure from Polish organizations, and find no employment as long as they still belong to German organizations or send their children to German schools;

(*f*) the sad plight of those young people who have passed through schools which have been licensed by the Polish State, but afterwards in preparing themselves for a profession have been caused such great difficulties that a disproportionately high percentage of young people of German birth have not yet been able to enter any profession;

(*g*) the boycott of all German businesses in the severed territories, which has even been publicly proclaimed recently.

* *In accordance with the Frontier Zones Order of 23 December 1927 and the orders issued for the purpose of its execution, limitations were introduced in regard to residence and the acquisition of landed property within a certain zone. To this zone belonged the whole of Pommerellen, also the whole of the Corridor district, almost the whole of the province of Posen, and the whole of Upper Silesia. In spite of these representations by Germany the Frontier Zone Order was made more rigorous on 1 July 1937.*

In consideration of the various personal and family connections of the frontier population it is natural that it has become known in Germany that those belonging to the German minority are forfeiting their means of existence in a continually increasing degree. As public feeling is mounting, the Government of the Reich are called upon to take reprisals and to limit the scope of existence for those belonging to the Polish minority in Germany who hitherto have been following out and carrying on their occupation without let or hindrance. The Government of the Reich naturally desire not to have to proceed to reprisals against Poland but cannot, on the other hand, close their eyes to the fact that the increasing pressure to which the Germans in Poland are being continuously subjected is causing pain and disapproval within the Reich, and that the popularity of a generous policy of coming to an understanding with Poland is suffering severely as a result of these measures on the part of subordinate Polish authorities.

7. The Government of the Reich, therefore, urgently request that the minorities question may be examined again in consideration of and in connection with the foregoing points of view. They hope that the Polish Government will, however, still decide to enter into discussions in some form or another of a fundamental settlement, and that they will, moreover, adopt measures as soon as possible in order to curb the chauvinism prevailing in the western provinces of Poland; for this chauvinism involves the serious danger of the co-operation between the German and Polish Governments, which had had such a favourable beginning, being hampered in its further fruitful development.

On 5 November 1937, an Identic Declaration was actually made by both Governments. In view of Poland's refusal to agree to a treaty involving definite obligations for both parties, this Declaration was, in practice, deprived of a large measure of its effectiveness.

The coercive measures adopted by the Poles against the German minority were accompanied by continued anti-German acts of provocation. That the final aim of Polish policy as regards Danzig was to incorporate the Free City into the Polish State was made obvious at a Polish national demonstration concerning which the German Consul-General in Danzig sent the following report to the German Foreign Office:—

No. 10 (192)

The German Consul-General in Danzig to the German Foreign Office
Report

(Translation)

Danzig, 15 November 1937

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Polish Declaration of Independence on 11 November celebrations took place last Sunday in villages inhabited by Polish minorities in the Free State of Danzig. Numerous Danzig residents of Polish extraction took part in the festivities.

During one of the celebrations in the village of Gross-Trampken some remarkable statements were made in a speech by M. Chodacki, Poland's Diplomatic Representative in Danzig. He said amongst other things: "I remember the time very well when I joined up in the Great War hoping for Poland's resurrection. The Poles here in Danzig should likewise hope and wait for the time when, in the near future, they will be living on Polish soil."

von Luckwald

During 1938, German-Polish relations deteriorated still further, a fact which was due to a great extent to the provocative attitude of the Polish Press. In this connection the German Ambassador in Warsaw reported as follows:—

No. 11 (117)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office *Report*

(Translation)

Warsaw, 2 September 1938

The attitude of the Polish Press and of other organs of publicity in Poland towards Germany has latterly become unmistakably worse. This attitude was never satisfactory, and continually failed to come up to the expectations which had been frequently associated by Germans with the political Agreement and the Press Pact of 1934. It is true that newspapers inspired by the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other organs of political opinion were mostly correct in their behaviour and in many questions, particularly foreign political ones, often displayed an attitude which must be appreciated, but not even did the so-called 'camp of national unity', that is to say the party organization of the Government which had been created for the purpose of winning the "masses" for the prevailing system, fail to make use of anti-German catchwords in its competition with the other political groups, and in order to gain more popularity.

The Polish Government are maintaining considerable reserve in the face of these incidents; at all events there are no signs of any kind of energetic counter-action being taken. It may be true that the possibility for the Polish authorities of exercising influence upon the Press is limited, but such an extremely passive attitude can indeed only be explained by the fact that the Government are afraid of employing such means of force as they actually possess, for the protection of the unpopular German interests, showing far greater energy in representing their own interests. It would

seem hardly credible that it should be impossible to prevent the repeated provocative demonstrations in the towns in the western districts, staged by the West Marches Society, which is in close contact with the Government.

It cannot escape the notice of the Polish Government that this passive attitude is gradually creating an atmosphere which is becoming continually more incompatible with the German-Polish policy of coming to an agreement. Certainly one has never, here in Poland, noticed a very cordial tone in regard to Germany, and when there were critical moments, the Poles always attached importance to not allowing their connections with Germany to appear to be too intimate. That, however, the song of hate, the "Rota", can be sung in front of a German Consulate-General without anything being done to prevent it, is indeed an incident of a kind which has not been experienced since 1934. It is obvious that the Beck policy is at the present time still less popular than previously, and the Foreign Minister himself is forced to maintain great reserve. In the well-known case of the German secondary school at Bromberg, where the gentleman agreement with M. Beck had quite clearly been wrecked by the local administrative authorities, we have a clear indication of the tension which exists within the country. As a matter of fact, the members of the Polish Government themselves do not seem to hold a common view in regard to this very question of the German policy of M. Beck. At all events, it can in all probability be assumed that neither the Minister for War nor Marshal Smigly-Rydz are cordially co-operating in M. Beck's policy. In this connection it is also interesting to note that even an old pioneer of the policy of coming to an understanding with Germany, like Mackiewicz, editor-in-chief of the Wilna *Slowo*, recently attacked M. Beck's policy in an article which was almost sensational, reproaching M. Beck that he, by his policy of friendship with Germany,

was neglecting the relations with England and France without having obtained corresponding advantages from the co-operation with Germany.

Yesterday I again brought to the serious notice of M. Beck the unfavourable development in Polish public opinion and the recent particularly anti-German demonstrations; I had a few days ago touched upon the same subject when talking with the acting Vice-minister, M. Arciszewski. M. Beck did not deny that the situation was unsatisfactory, and said he had, immediately after his return from leave, on his own initiative drawn the attention of the Premier to these things, and that the latter had shown full appreciation. When I observed that we were not able to understand why an end was not put at least to the repeated demonstrations of the West Marches Society, M. Beck replied that it was not advisable to proceed merely with prohibitions, but sometimes better to open a safety-valve. The Government had, therefore, restricted themselves to reducing to a very limited degree the intentions of the demonstrators, which went very much further. In addition, M. Beck attempted to show that the attacks upon Germany were really not of such great significance and assured me that the Government were in no wise allowing themselves to be influenced by the nervousness of public opinion but were keeping to the old line of policy.

Although M. Beck was very definite in this statement, one cannot disguise from oneself the fact that there is an unfriendly feeling already prevailing against us here, which might of course hamper the Polish Government when coming to resolutions on decisive questions.

von Moltke

The growing anti-German agitation reached its first climax at the end of February 1939 when, without obvious reason, fierce anti-German demonstrations, which the police scarcely

attempted to check, took place in front of the German Embassy in Warsaw and of German Consulates in the provinces. Frenzied crowds sang anti-German songs, cheered for "Polish Danzig", abused the "German dogs" and broke windows. The Polish Government, it is true, officially expressed their regret, but this did not serve to conceal the alarming nature of these signs of growing Polish aggressiveness.

SECOND CHAPTER

British War Policy after the Munich Agreement-Germany's Effort to secure an amicable Settlement of the Problems of Danzig and the Polish Corridor

A. Pro-war agitation in Britain — Germany's proposals to Poland.

No. 12 (217)

Joint Declaration made by the Fuehrer and Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, Munich, 30 September 1938

(Translation)

We, the German Fuehrer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting to-day and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.

We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe.

Adolf Hitler — Neville Chamberlain

After many years of unreciprocated effort on the part of Germany to secure the friendship of Britain, the Anglo-German Munich Declaration, the text of which is given above,

seemed to indicate that the relations between the two countries had taken that turn for the better which, as is well known, had from the outset formed part of the National-Socialist foreign political programme. The Munich Agreement had effectually done away with the Czech crisis. The Fuehrer considered it now possible to stabilize relations with Britain on a permanent basis and thus to secure for his own people and for all other European nations a long period of peace. How great was then the general disappointment when, only three days after the Munich Declaration, Mr. Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, informed the House of Commons that Britain would proceed to rearm at all costs. This speech, of which an extract is given below, was accompanied by violent attacks on Germany by members of the Opposition.

No. 13 (218)

Extract from Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, 3 October 1938

". . . . . I believe there are many who will feel with me that such a declaration, signed by the German Chancellor and myself, is something more than a pious expression of opinion. In our relations with other countries everything depends upon there being sincerity and good will on both sides. I believe that there is sincerity and good will on both sides in this declaration. That is why to me its significance goes far beyond its actual words. If there is one lesson which we should learn from the events of these last weeks it is this, that lasting peace is not to be obtained by sitting still and waiting for it to come. It requires active, positive efforts to achieve it. No doubt I shall have plenty of critics who will say that I am guilty of facile optimism, and that I should disbelieve every word that is uttered by rulers of other great States in Europe. I am too much of a realist to believe that

we are going to achieve our paradise in a day. We have only laid the foundations of peace. The superstructure is not even begun.

For a long period now we have been engaged in this country in a great programme of rearmament, which is daily increasing in pace and volume. Let no one think that because we have signed this agreement between these four Powers at Munich we can afford to relax our efforts in regard to that programme at this moment. Disarmament on the part of this country can never be unilateral again. We have tried that once, and we very nearly brought ourselves to disaster. If disarmament is to come it must come by steps, and it must come by agreement and the active co-operation of other countries. Until we know that we have obtained that co-operation and until we have agreed upon the actual steps to be taken, we here must remain on guard . . . ."

Once again the attitude not only of the British Prime Minister himself, but primarily of the Opposition, which was contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Munich Agreement, forced the Fuehrer in a speech delivered at Saarbrücken on 9 October 1938, to point out that Mr. Duff Cooper, Mr. Eden or Mr. Winston Churchill might come into power in Britain in Mr. Chamberlain's stead and that in that case a world war would probably ensue, since this was the publicly avowed aim of these men. On the very next day, Mr. Hore Belisha, British Secretary of State for War, replied in a speech in which he announced further rearmament measures to be adopted by Britain. During the months which followed, these measures, which were concerned with offensive weapons and aims, including the building up of an expeditionary force for a continental war, were carried out at an increasing rate. At the same time, Britain urged France as her ally to increase her armaments, especially with regard to her air arm. That the warning uttered by the Fuehrer

in Saarbrücken was only too justified was proved a few days after when Mr. Winston Churchill, in a broadcast message to the United States, made it clear in his customary war-mongering tone, that the British political circles referred to above did not intend to adhere to the Munich Agreement.

No. 14 (223)

Extract from a Speech by Mr. Winston Churchill, broadcast in the United States of America, 16 October 1938

. . . . . We must arm. If, through an earnest desire for peace, we have placed ourselves at a disadvantage, we must make up for it by redoubled exertions, and, if necessary, by fortitude in suffering. We shall no doubt arm.

Britain, casting away the habits of centuries, will decree national service upon her citizens. The British people will stand erect and will face whatever may be coming. But arms-instrumentalities,—as President Wilson called them—are not sufficient by themselves. We must add to them the power of ideas.

People say we ought not to allow ourselves to be drawn into a theoretical antagonism between Nazidom and democracy, but the antagonism is here now.

It is this very conflict of spiritual and moral ideas which gives the free countries a great part of their strength.

. . . . The light of civilized progress with its tolerances and co-operations, with its dignities and joys, has often in the past been blotted out.

But I hold the belief that we have now at last got far enough ahead of barbarism to control it and to avert it, if only we realize what is afoot and make up our minds in time. We shall do it in the end. But how much harder our toil, the longer the delay!

Is this a call to war? I declare it to be the sole guarantee of peace. The swift and resolute gathering of forces to confront not only military but moral aggression; the resolute and sober acceptance of their duty by the English-speaking peoples and by all the nations, great and small, who wish to walk with them; their faithful and zealous comradeship would almost between night and morning clear the path of progress and banish from all our lives the fear which already darkens the sunlight to hundreds of millions of men......

During the weeks immediately following the conclusion of the Munich Agreement, the catchword "Poland" continually appeared in the British Press. On the other hand, Poland had, with Germany's assistance, just acquired the Olsa territory and aspired to the establishment of a common frontier with Hungary. The time, therefore, seemed propitious for a final settlement, satisfying the honour of both parties, of the main German-Polish problems, namely those of Danzig and the Corridor. That both problems had to be solved is obvious from what has been said in the first chapter with regard to the constantly recurring tension in German-Polish relations and also the plight of the German minority in Poland which, despite the existing German-Polish agreement, was steadily becoming worse. Germany sought, however, to reach a settlement, not in defiance of, but in co-operation with Poland on the basis of the 1934 agreement. The German demands were so moderate as to constitute the very minimum of what she could claim. This is proved by the conversation between the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Polish Ambassador, given below, at which the German proposals were formulated for the first time. They were never altered in substance.

No. 15 (197)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the Polish Ambassador at Berchtesgaden, 24 October 1938
(Translation)

Memo by Herr Hewel, Councillor of Legation

At the beginning of the conversation the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs described the situation to the Polish Ambassador.

M. Lipski then explained the reason of his visit:—Poland was interested in the stabilization of the Danube Basin. The Carpatho-Ukraine, with its disorder, with a population eighty per cent of which was illiterate, was a storm centre from which issued every imaginable kind of political current, a downright centre of Communism. It had 650,000 inhabitants in all, of whom about 250,000 were Hungarians and Jews, and 400,000 Ruthenians. Poland had already exchanged numerous acrimonious Notes with Prague about this centre of unrest. M. Beck had told him he wanted something sensible to emerge from this crisis. Poland's wish was that this territory should be linked to Hungary.

For the rest a common Polish-Hungarian frontier was of great value to bar off the east. The rumours that a block was being formed against Germany were nonsense; they had been completely refuted by the attitude of Poland to Soviet Russia during the crisis. Polish policy had aimed at inducing the Hungarian Government to be moderate in the Slovakian question and to take the offensive in the matter of the Carpatho-Ukraine. He, Lipski, hoped that a solution in the sense mentioned would not run counter to German interests.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs explained to the Ambassador that these ideas were somewhat new to him, and that he would think them over in detail. He could understand

Poland's wishes, but he also saw certain difficulties to which we should have to pay consideration.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs then came to the great general problem which had led him to ask M. Lipski to come to Berchtesgaden and which he would like to broach quite confidentially, as between M. Lipski, M. Beck and himself. He asked the Ambassador to report what was discussed to M. Beck by word of mouth; otherwise there would be great danger of things leaking out, especially to the press. To this the Ambassador agreed. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs in introducing the subject used the opportunity to invite M. Beck, asking if he could not pay him a visit sometime in the course of the following month. Germany, he said, would always welcome her Polish friends. The Ambassador expressed his gratification and undertook to inform M. Beck.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs then went on to say that he thought it was time to make a clean sweep of all existing possibilities of friction between Germany and Poland. This would crown the work inaugurated by Marshal Pilsudski and the Fuehrer. As a comparison he instanced our relations with Italy, in which the Fuehrer for the sake of a general settlement and with deep insight had renounced all claims to South Tyrol. Such an agreement was worth attempting with Poland and would be useful for Poland; and it accorded with the Fuehrer's policy, which was directed towards the attainment of clear relations with all neighbours. In the case of France too it was not impossible that agreements going beyond the Fuehrer's declaration concerning the frontier would be reached some day. In Poland's case the first thing was to discuss Danzig, as a partial solution in a general adjustment of the relations between the two nations. Danzig was German —it always had been German, and it would always remain German. He, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, was thinking of a solution that would, broadly speaking, be as follows:—

1. The Free State of Danzig to return to the German Reich.
2. An extra-territorial motor-road belonging to Germany to be built across the Corridor, and likewise an extra-territorial railway with several tracks.
3. Poland likewise to obtain in the territory of Danzig an extra-territorial road or motor-road, a railway, and a free port.
4. Poland to obtain a guarantee for the sale of her goods in Danzig territory.
5. The two nations to recognize their common frontiers (guarantee), or their respective territories.
6. The German-Polish Treaty to be prolonged by ten to twenty-five years.
7. The two countries to add to their treaty a stipulation providing for consultation.

The Polish Ambassador took note of this suggestion. Although naturally he had first to speak to M. Beck, he would like to say already that it was mistaken to regard Danzig as a product of Versailles, like the Saar Territory, for instance. One must follow the growth of Danzig historically and geographically to get a correct angle to the problem.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that he did not desire an immediate answer. The Ambassador was to think it all over and to speak to M. Beck as soon as possible. After all there must be a certain give and take in these considerations. For reasons of home politics a final recognition of the Corridor was not easy for the Fuehrer, either. One must think in terms of centuries in this case—Danzig after all was German and would always remain so.

M. Lipski promised to go into all this very thoroughly with M. Beck. He intended to go to Warsaw about Thursday and could be back at the beginning of the following week. What concerned him most was an exchange of ideas about the Hun-

garian question. M. Beck had instructed him to say that Poland was ready to participate, if Hungary's wish for arbitration by the three countries, Germany, Italy, and Poland, were accepted by the first two countries.

In reply the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs pointed to the risks which would be incurred by an arbitration award.

In a second short conversation the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned the Carpatho-Ukraine. The Ambassador emphasized that Poland had no interest in extending her frontiers there. Poland's sole wish was to receive a joint frontier with Hungary.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs promised to think over the whole group of problems again, and in this connection expressed the opinion that if a general settlement could be reached between Germany and Poland, a happy solution could certainly also be found for this problem.

The tone of the conversation was very friendly throughout.

Hewel

Some three weeks after this discussion M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador, paid a visit to Herr von Ribbentrop, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, and submitted a reply which partly deferred and partly evaded the German proposals, the alleged reason being internal political difficulties.

It is of the utmost significance that neither at this discussion nor at a conversation which took place between M. Beck and the German Ambassador in Warsaw on 14 December, nor yet on the occasion of M. Beck's memorable talk with the Fuehrer on 5 January 1939, did Poland betray by the slightest sign that she felt herself threatened in any way.

On the contrary, the three documents which follow show clearly that, as late as 26 January 1939, when the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs again had a talk with M. Beck in Warsaw, Poland received the moderate and positive German proposals without protest and promised to weigh them care-

fully. The five discussions which took place between 24 October 1938 and 26 January 1939, between the Fuehrer or the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs and Herr von Moltke, the German Ambassador, on the one side and M. Beck and Lipski, on the other, make it plain that, although Poland was obviously endeavouring to prolong the negotiations with Germany, there was, up to that point, a definite prospect that a peaceful settlement satisfying the claims of both parties might still be reached. This was particularly evident at the talk between the Fuehrer and M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, on 5 January 1939, when the Fuehrer described the broad, amicable basis on which he conceived the future development of German-Polish relations and the solution of the problem of Danzig and the Polish Corridor. It was a solution by which Poland stood to gain and which did away with the possibility of conflict in the future.

No. 16 (198)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the Polish Ambassador, 19 November 1938

Memo

(*Translation*)

At 1 p.m. to-day I received M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador.

M. Lipski explained to me that he had informed the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Beck, about the substance of our discussion of 24 October at Berchtesgaden, and that he was now in a position to tell me what M. Beck thought about these matters. M. Lipski then read portions of his instructions aloud from a slip of paper.

1. The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs was of opinion that German-Polish relations had in general stood the test.

Polish Agreement had been constructed on a durable foundation. M. Beck considered that Poland's straightforward policy had been of use to Germany when the latter acquired possession of the Sudeten German Territory, and had contributed materially to the attainment of a solution of this question in accordance with German views. During these critical days the Polish Government had turned a deaf ear to all lures coming from a certain quarter.

I answered M. Lipski that in my opinion too the German-Polish Agreement had shown itself capable of withstanding considerable strain. The Fuehrer's action against Czecho-Slovakia had enabled Poland to gain possession of the Olsa territory, and to satisfy a number of other wishes with regard to frontiers. For the rest I agreed with him that the Polish attitude had made things easier for Germany.

2. M. Lipski then made a lengthy speech to prove the importance and value which Danzig as a Free City had for Poland.

For reasons of home politics too it was difficult for the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs to assent to the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich. M. Beck had been revolving the question in his mind how all points of friction about Danzig which might possibly arise between Germany and Poland could be done away with once and for all. His idea was that the League of Nations' Danzig Statute might be replaced by a German-Polish treaty dealing with all Danzig questions. This treaty might be based on the recognition of Danzig as a purely German town with all rights resulting from this. On the other hand Poland and the Polish minority should likewise have all economic rights assured to them. In this arrangement the character of Danzig as a Free State and the customs union with Poland would be preserved.

I answered M. Lipski that I regretted M. Beck's attitude. The suggestion for a permanent solution of the German-Polish

problem by which Danzig fell to Germany might increase M. Beck's burden in home politics, but on the other hand it was obvious that it would also be no easy matter for the Fuehrer to tell the German people that he was guaranteeing the Polish Corridor. The purpose underlying my suggestion was to establish German Polish relations on a foundation as lasting as solid rock, and to do away with all possible points of friction. It had not been my intention to have a diplomatic chat. As he, M. Lipski, could perceive from the Fuehrer's speeches, the latter had always taken a long view in dealing with the German-Polish question. In his presence, at a recent meeting of international press representatives, I had made it clear that good German-Polish relations were fundamental to German policy.

The Ambassador, M. Lipski, thanked me for these remarks, and then returned to the proposal for a bilateral treaty about Danzig. I explained to him that I could not give a final decision on this, but to me the proposal did not seem easy of accomplishment.

3. I then asked M. Lipski what M. Beck thought about the question of an extra-territorial motor-road and of a likewise extra-territorial double-track railway through the Polish Corridor.

M. Lipski answered that he was not in a position to go into the matter or make any official pronouncement. Purely for his own person he could say that such a wish on the part of Germany might conceivably not fall on barren ground in Poland, and that perhaps opportunities might occur for finding a solution in this direction.

4. I then spoke to M. Lipski about the Polish postage stamps just issued, which were intended for Danzig use and which represented Danzig as if it were a Polish town. Here again he could understand that this hurt the feelings of the German population of Danzig.

M. Lipski declared that he was not well informed about the matter, but he would make enquiries.

In conclusion I told M. Lipski it would repay trouble to give serious consideration to German proposals dealing with the whole complex of German-Polish relations. It was desired here to create something lasting and to bring about a really stable condition of things. Naturally that could not be done in a day. If M. Beck would think over our proposals quietly, he might perhaps see his way to adopting a positive attitude.

von Ribbentrop

No. 17 (200)

Conversation of the Fuehrer with M. Beck,
Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the presence of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, the German Ambassador in Warsaw, and the Polish Ambassador in Berlin,
Berchtesgaden, 5 January 1939

Memo by Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

In his introductory words M. Beck stressed the fact that in the September crisis German-Polish relations had stood the test without a sign of strain. It might be that during the last few months the high standard exhibited by the relations last September had shown some falling off, but in the opinion of the Polish Government both parties should exert themselves to remove the causes of certain difficulties which had arisen in the immediate past. M. Beck instanced the Danzig question as one of the difficulties, whereby he emphasized the fact that in this case it was not only the German and the Polish Governments that where concerned; there were also third parties, among others the League of Nations. What would be the proper course, for instance, if the League of Nations were to withdraw from its rôle in Danzig? This was not the only instance in which existing misunderstandings had to be remov-

ed. Amongst others there was the guaranteeing of the Czecho-Slovakian frontier, the question whether it ought to be taken in hand immediately or, if at all, what point of time was contemplated for this. Poland was especially interested in the Carpatho-Ukrainian question. He would remind them of Marshal Pilsudski's words about the "Balkanizing of Central Europe". In the agitators who were now pursuing their activities in the Carpatho-Ukrainian region Poland recognized old enemies in a new guise. She feared that the Carpatho-Ukraine might one day grow into such a centre of disquietude for Poland that the Polish Government might see themselves called upon to intervene. This might result in further complications. That above all had been the compelling reason for Poland's efforts to attain a joint frontier with Hungary.

The Fuehrer replied that a settlement of all existing difficulties could only be obtained by recalling the general course of German-Polish relations. On the German side he could say emphatically that Germany's relations to Poland were embodied in the non-aggression pact of 1934; since then there had not been the slightest change in them. In the question of the Carpatho-Ukraine particularly—here he was thinking of the motives attributed to Germany in the international press—he was in a position to state that Poland had absolutely no cause for fear. Germany had no interests on the other side of the Carpathians, and was indifferent about what interested countries did there. The attitude adopted by Germany in regard to the Ukrainian question on the occasion of the Vienna arbitration award was an attitude which had perhaps led to certain misunderstandings with Poland, but it was easily to be explained by the historical development of the question. This arbitration award had been put into execution on the basis of the Hungarian demands after both parties had been heard. What had really and finally determined his (the Fuehrer's) attitude in the Ukrainian question was his wish that in no case should matters be permitted to come to an international conflict.

With respect to the details of German-Polish relations, he wished once more to repeat that there had been no change in the German attitude towards Poland since 1934. To attain a final adjustment of the still unsettled questions between the two countries, one should not confine oneself to the rather negative agreement of 1934, but should seek to formulate a treaty which would cover these single problems and dispose of them. On the German side there was not only the Memel question, which would be settled in a manner consonant with German views (there were signs that the Lithuanians were willing to co-operate in finding a sensible solution), there was also the problem of Danzig and the Corridor, a problem that directly affected German-Polish relations. The fact that Germany felt so keenly on this matter made it extremely difficult to find a solution. In his opinion it was necessary here to get out of the old grooves and seek a solution on completely novel lines. In the case of Danzig, for instance, one could imagine an arrangement by which this city, in conformity with the will of its inhabitants, should be reincorporated in the German body politic, whereby, as a matter of course, Polish interests, particularly in the economic sphere, must be safeguarded in every respect. That indeed was in the interests of Danzig, for economically Danzig could not exist without a hinterland, consequently what he, the Fuehrer, had in mind was a formula by which Danzig would return to Germany politically, but economically would remain with Poland.

Danzig was German, would always remain German, and sooner or later would return to Germany.

With respect to the Corridor, which, as already mentioned, presented a grave psychological difficulty for Germany, the Fuehrer pointed out that for the Reich the connection with East Prussia was as vital a matter as for Poland the connection with the sea. Here too it might be possible by the use of quite novel methods to find a solution that would pay due regard to the interests of both.

If means could be found to bring about a final settlement of all individual questions on such a basis of common sense, whereby as a matter of course each partner would obtain his rights, the time would have arrived when in the relations of Germany to Poland the rather negative declaration of 1934 might be supplemented by a treaty of a more positive character, like the agreements with France, in which Germany would guarantee Poland her frontiers clearly and in so many words. Poland would then have the great advantage of getting her frontiers with Germany, including the Corridor, assured by treaty. The Fuehrer, in saying this, stressed once more the psychological difficulty of the Corridor problem and the fact that only he was in a position to propose such a solution with success. For him (the Fuehrer) it was not quite a simple matter to guarantee the Corridor in this way, and he would certainly be considerably criticized for it, especially by the bourgeoisie. But as a practical politician he nevertheless believed that such a solution would be best. When once Germany had given her guarantee, one would hear as little about the Polish Corridor as one did now of South Tyrol or Alsace-Lorraine.

The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs thanked the Fuehrer for his exposition of the German standpoint, and declared that Poland for her part would also abide by the attitude she had maintained towards Germany till then.

Poland would continue the line of independent policy she had pursued in former years, when an attempt was made to link Poland more closely with Russia through the medium of an Eastern Pact. Poland, it was true, was not so nervously desirous as France to have her security buttressed up, and she placed no trust in so-called "security systems". Their final burial after the September crisis indeed marked a turning-point in history. But Poland could thoroughly appreciate the German point of view as expressed once more in the declara-

tion just made by the Fuehrer. For her part she would hold fast to the old line of policy towards Germany.

As to German-Polish relations he took cognizance of the wishes uttered by the Fuehrer. Nevertheless the Danzig question appeared to him extraordinarily difficult. In this connection one had especially to take public opinion in Poland into account. By this he did not mean the attitude of "the coffee-house opposition". During his seven years' period of office he had never paid the least attention to coffee-house opinion, and he was still in office. But he had to pay regard to the real opinion of the nation, and there he saw difficulties in the way of a solution of the Danzig question. But he intended, nevertheless, to think the matter over quietly.

Colonel Beck did not enter into the other German-Polish questions broached by the Fuehrer, but concluded his remarks with a renewed confirmation of his statement that in her general attitude Poland would now as before remain true to the line followed since 1934.

Schmidt

No. 18 (201)

Conversation between the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs and M. Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Munich, 6 January 1939

Memo

(Translation)

Berlin, 9 January 1939

At the beginning of a conversation lasting about an hour and a half M. Beck immediately reverted to the Danzig problem. He said that Poland, too, was endeavouring to continue neighbourly relations with Germany, and to improve them. The only problem which might shortly produce disturbing effects in this connection was the Danzig question. Two

possibilities might, he said, arise requiring us to define our attitude with regard to the problem :—

1. That the League of Nations would cease to interest itself in the Danzig question and would recall the High Commissioner, in which case Germany and Poland would have to settle the question between themselves.

2. That the Poles would be compelled to take up the matter owing to new developments in Danzig.

He added that the problem was, in fact, a very difficult one and that he had cudgelled his brains for a solution, without, however, any result so far.

Finally, M. Beck pointed out once more that Danzig was, in the mind of the entire Polish people, the acid test of German-Polish relations and that it would be very difficult to alter this fact in any way.

In reply I explained to M. Beck that :—

1. As the Fuehrer had already said there was, on the German side, an unqualified desire for a final, comprehensive and generous consolidation of our mutual relations.

2. In this connection two problems seemed important :—

(a) Direct German-Polish relations. In this connection I should suggest the following solution :—

Re-union of Danzig with Germany. In return for this the guarantee of all Polish economic interests in this territory, in the most generous manner. Connection between Germany and her province of East Prussia by means of an extra-territorial motor-road and railway. In compensation thereof, Germany to guarantee the Corridor and all Poland's present possessions, i. e., the ultimate and permanent recognition of their common frontiers.

(b) The Czecho-Carpatho-Ukrainian question.

In this connection I repeated that ethnographical frontiers had been fixed at Munich. Should the principle of political frontiers be brought up by any side, Germany would not, of course, remain disinterested. Although German political interests did not, in themselves, extend beyond the Carpathians, Germany considered it impossible, over and above this, to declare her disinterestedness in any alteration of frontiers in regard to Czecho-Slovakia and the Carpatho-Ukraine, because such events might easily involve her in a conflict. The decision arrived at by the arbiters in Vienna must be observed, and it was our fundamental conception that, in the event of other wishes cropping up in this connection, such wishes must be brought into accord with German interests.

At the close of the conversation I complained to M. Beck about the treatment of our German minorities, mainly those in the Olsa territory, and took occasion to object most emphatically to M. Grażyński's continued anti-German intrigues. M. Beck assured me that this question had already received serious attention and that he, for his part, would do his utmost to bring about a more satisfactory state of affairs.

I then thanked M. Beck for his invitation to come to Warsaw, which I accepted on principle. A date has not yet been fixed. It was agreed that M. Beck and I should once more consider in detail the whole complex of an eventual treaty between Poland and ourselves. M. Lipski and Herr Moltke were to carry on negotiations during the next few weeks, and my visit was to take place, at all events, this winter.

von Ribbentrop

No. 19 (202)

Conversation between the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs and M. Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, 26 January 1939

Memo

(Translation)

Berlin, 1 February 1939

1. In my conversation with M. Beck, which was a continuation of our conversation at Munich on 6 January, I reverted to the former proposal concerning the re-union of Danzig with the Reich in return for a guarantee of Poland's economic interests there, the building of an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection between Germany and her province of East Prussia, to be compensated on the German side by a guarantee of the German-Polish frontier. In this connection I stated again that it was the wish of the Fuehrer to achieve a complete conciliation in respect of German-Polish relations by means of corresponding treaties. It was important that M. Beck should realize that the German wishes were extraordinarily moderate, since, even to-day, the allocation of exceedingly valuable sections of severed German territory to Poland, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, is regarded by every German as a great injustice, made possible at the time only by Germany's extreme impotence. Ninety-nine out of a hundred Englishmen or Frenchmen would, if asked, say at once that the return of Danzig and of the Corridor, at least, was a natural demand on the part of Germany.

M. Beck seemed impressed by what I had said, but again pointed out that inner-political opposition was to be expected; he would, nevertheless, carefully consider our suggestion.

I have come to an agreement with M. Beck that, should the League of Nations withdraw from Danzig before a comprehensive treaty applying also to Danzig has been reached

between us and Poland, we should get into touch with him in order to find a solution for this contingency.

2. I again complained to M. Beck about the treatment of our German minority, and arranged with him that the discussions which had long been planned between the leading officials of the respective Ministries for Home Affairs should be begun immediately.

von Ribbentrop

Whilst, since the end of October, the Reich Government had been untiring in their efforts to come to an amicable settlement with Poland and thus to stabilize the peace of Europe, the pro-war and rearmament campaign announced by Mr. Chamberlain in his statement in the House of Commons on 3 October 1938 was being continued without interruption. This is proved, for example, by a speech made in the House of Commons by Mr. R. S. Hudson, Secretary for the Overseas Trade Department, in which he inveighed against the economic position of Germany in Central and Southeastern Europe. Mr. Duff Cooper, formerly First Lord of the Admiralty, was even more outspoken when he delivered a lecture in Paris on 10 December. On 5 January, the very day on which the Fuehrer received M. Beck, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the most friendly fashion at Berchtesgaden, the German Ambassador in London found himself compelled to protest against the growing and unbridled pro-war agitation indulged in by the British Press and by certain widely-read and well-known British writers.

No. 20 (229)

Speech by Mr. R. S. Hudson, Secretary, Department of Overseas Trade, in the House of Commons, 30 November 1938

Extract

. . . . Finally, we come to the question of Germany. The hon. Member asked why we did not refuse to extend the most-

favoured-nation treatment to Germany, following the example of the United States. The answer is that Germany is refused most-favoured-nation treatment by the United States because she is discriminating against American goods in Germany. Germany is not discriminating against British goods in Germany. Our complaint is that Germany is, by her methods, destroying trade throughout the world. We thus have no case for taking away most-favoured-nation treatment, which depends upon how Germany treats our goods in Germany, and the question is the very much broader one of how to meet the new form of German competition throughout the world.

.... As far as we can make out, because it is difficult to get very exact information as to the way in which things are done in Germany, the basis of their hold is that they pay to producers in Central and South eastern Europe much more than the world price. Obviously, they do that at the expense of their own people. How they treat their own people is a matter for the German Government, but it does affect us.

.... I am trying to explain that by these methods Germany is obtaining a stranglehold on the countries in that part of Europe, an uneconomic stranglehold at the expense of her own people, because it means raising the cost of living to her own people and, in fact, exporting goods at less than cost price. Hon. Members ask: "What is the solution here?"

.... We have made a survey of all possible methods and the only way we see is by organizing our industries in such a way that they will be able to speak as units with their opposite numbers in Germany and say, "Unless you are prepared to put an end to this form of treatment, unless you are prepared to come to an agreement to sell your goods at prices which represent a reasonable return, then we will fight you and beat you at your own game." This country is infinitely stronger financially than, I was going to say, any other country in the world, but certainly stronger than Germany, and therefore

we have great advantages, advantages which I believe will result in our winning the fight; but it is an essential preliminary that our own industries should be organized....

No. 21 (232)

The German Ambassador in Paris to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, 10 December 1938

On 7 December, Mr. Duff Cooper gave a lecture in the *Théâtre des Ambassadeurs* in Paris on the subject of "Anglo-French Friendship and Peace". In the course of his remarks which were of a war-mongering nature and directed throughout against Germany, at times even in an insulting manner, the speaker emphasized the necessity for an Anglo-French coalition for the safeguarding of the interests of both countries. He said that although Germany was strong, these two peoples together were a match for her and that there was absolutely no reason to assume that the outcome of any conflict which might take place would be in Germany's favour. Mr. Duff Cooper found consolation in stating that in case of war, America would remain in the background as the staunch friend of the Western Democracies. In another war, he said, it was not so much the fate of Britain and France which would be at stake but the fate of civilization as a whole. All past civilizations, he asserted, with a subtle reference to Germany, had been destroyed by peoples who, although superior in numbers and in strength, were culturally inferior.

By Order
Bräuer

No. 22 (233)

The German Ambassador in London to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, 5 January 1939

I did not untertake the step advised in instructions until to-day so that I might speak in person to Lord Halifax who has been absent on Christmas leave until now. I protested very strongly against the grave insults to the Fuehrer and to leading German statesman contained in Wells' article published in the *News Chronicle,* and I pointed out that the Embassy during the past few months had unfortunately been forced to complain, on an increasing number of occasions, about affronts to the Fuehrer. I reminded Lord Halifax of these complaints and their cause by quoting individual instances. The most serious affront of all was that which appeared in Wells' New Year article in the *News Chronicle,* in which the author appeared to be aiming less at criticism in which abusive terms were not avoided, than at intentionally heaping grave insults on the Fuehrer and his closest collaborators.

I said that I was aware that the British Government refused to entertain the possibility of bringing their influence to bear directly on the Press and that they had referred to the absence of a legal handle. I added that I had likewise noticed that Wells in neither of his articles refrained from passing detractive criticism on the British King and Queen and that they contained serious affronts to Mr. Chamberlain.

I pointed out that this, however, did not alter the fact that the numerous defamations of the head of the German State and the impossibility of obtaining adequate satisfaction were an affront to German national feeling and would inevitably have a detrimental effect on Anglo-German relations. I therefore wished to raise the question once more whether it would

matters, at any rate in the future.

Lord Halifax replied that he had no hesitation in describing the article mentioned, which he had seen, as the most outrageous abuse of the Fuehrer that he had as yet read in the press. He said that he wished to express to me his unbounded regret at this affront to the Fuehrer and begged me to convey to the German Government this expression of his regret. It was, he continued, extremely regrettable that during the last months numerous lapses had again occurred, the explanation for which, although not constituting an excuse, was that abusive articles of this type, as for example that under discussion, were written chiefly for reasons connected with home politics and were aimed against the British Government. The general unsettled political atmosphere prevailing must also, he said, be taken into consideration.

I replied to Lord Halifax that the existing state of affairs could not continue and that I must earnestly request him to find some means of bringing about an improvement in order to avoid regrettable political consequences.

Lord Halifax promised, as far as his possibilities of using his influence went, to do his best to prevent such insults to the Fuehrer in future.

Dirksen

These documents provide ample proof that Britain's systematic preparations for war had been begun long before the existence of the pretext offered by the final dissolution of what remained of Czecho-Slovakia. As far back as 7 December, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies deemed it necessary to deprive the Munich Declaration of any real value by his point-blank refusal to discuss the question of colonies and mandated territories, thus preventing Germany from entering upon negotiations in this sphere. At the end of January, Mr. Chamberlain felt called upon to declare that he would, in given circumstances, have to play the same part towards Adolf

Hitler's Germany as Pitt the Younger had played towards Napoleon. Particularly characteristic of this period are two reports received from German Legations, which clearly demonstrate that the encirclement policy was being actively carried out even in countries far removed from Europe. The following reports from Ankara and Teheran provide definite proof of this.

No. 23 (240)

Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in Birmingham, 28 January 1939

Extract

..... We cannot forget that though it takes at least two to make a peace, one can make a war. And until we have come to clear understandings in which all political tension is swept away, we must put ourselves in a position to defend ourselves against attack, whether upon our land, our people, or the principles of freedom with which our existence as a democracy is bound up, and which to us seem to enshrine the highest attributes of human life and spirit.

It is for this purpose, for the purpose of defence and not of attack, that we are pursuing the task of rearmament with unrelenting vigour and with the full approval of the country.

..... But I cannot help once more registering my regret that it should be necessary to devote so much time and so vast a proportion of the revenue of the country to warlike preparations instead of to those more domestic questions which brought me into politics, the health and housing of the people, the improvement of their material conditions, the provision of recreation for their leisure, and the prosperity of industry and agriculture.

None of these subjects is, indeed, being neglected, but their

development is necessarily hampered and slowed up by the demands of national security.

Thinking over these things I recall the fate of one of the greatest of my predecessors, the younger Pitt. His interests lay at home in the repair of the financial system and in domestic reforms. But events abroad cut short his ambitions and reluctantly, and after long resisting his fate, he found himself involved in what was up to then the greatest war in our history. Worn out by the struggle he died before success had crowned our efforts, to which his own steadfast courage had contributed so much.

I trust that my lot may be happier than his, and that we may yet secure our aim of international peace.

We have so often defined our attitude that there can be no misunderstanding about it and I feel that it is time now that others should make their contribution to a result which would overflow with benefits to all. To-day the air is full of rumours and suspicions which ought not to be allowed to persist. For peace could only be endangered by such a challenge as was envisaged by the President of the United States in his New Year message, namely a demand to dominate the world by force. That would be a demand which, as the President indicated and I myself have already declared, the democracies must inevitably resist .....

No. 24 (236)

The German Chargé d'Affaires in Ankara to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Ankara, 17 January 1939

The British Ambassador here, Sir Percy L. Loraine, who has been accredited to Turkey since 15 February 1934, has been appointed British Ambassador in Rome, as has already

been reported in the press. He will leave Ankara in about five or six weeks, and spend some time travelling before taking up his new post in April. The former British Ambassador in China, Sir Hughes Montgomery Knatchbull-Hugessen K. C. M. G., has been appointed Sir Percy Loraine's successor.

Sir Percy Loraine has undoubtedly played a distinguished rôle during the five years of his activity here. He has made it his aim to bind Turkish policy closely to England. The realization of this aim, he perceived, demanded and presumed close economic collaboration, and he has persistently and perseveringly striven to promote England's economic influence in Turkey. Sir Percy Loraine was of opinion that in the long run this could only be achieved by lowering German economic influence, and in fact he has spared no pains to undermine Germany's predominant economic position in Turkey.

Kroll

No. 25 (245)

The German Minister in Teheran to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teheran, 4 March 1939

For several months, increasing political activity on the part of Great Britain, directed in no small measure against Germany and our position in Iran, has been observed here.

Only a year ago there were only slight indications here of any apparent British activity in political, economic or cultural spheres. An attentive observer could not but gain the impression that British foreign policy, which in former years displayed particularly marked activity in this part of the world, while attentively watching the progress of affairs in this rapidly developing State, was, in other respects, exhibiting pronounced reserve. Nor did this reserve undergo any appa-

rent change when other European Powers, in the first instance Germany, began to pay marked attention to the new Iran, and to consolidate and to develop their relations with this country in an economic direction in particular. It was further accepted with equanimity that Germany should, within a few years, have moved up from the fifth to the second place as a supplier to and purchaser from Iran, while Great Britain, which in 1936/37 still occupied the second place, was now relegated to the fourth. Even the establishment of a German air-route to the Near East, extending to Afghanistan close to the Indian frontier, and having as its original aim a further extension to China, thus providing for ports of call in important British spheres of interest in Central Asia, met at first with only slight opposition on the part of Great Britain. The relations between the German and the British diplomatic missions, as well as the personal relations between German and British nationals resident here, were as friendly as they could possibly be, and expressions of sympathy and admiration for the new Germany could often be heard in British circles.

The return of Austria to the Reich, received here with evident uneasiness, caused the first chill in these relations. Whilst the diplomatic missions of other countries expressed their satisfaction at the fact that one section of a nation had been reunited with another, and that a serious menace to European peace had thus been removed without bloodshed, severe criticism of the methods adopted by Germany was expressed in British circles, and thence spread further, even as far as leading government departments. The solution of the Sudeten-German problem, that acid test for the Berlin-Rome axis, as well as the great success of German statesmanship shown in the result of the Munich negotiations and recognized throughout the world, called forth in British circles here an attitude definitely hostile to Germany, which found free expression in conversations, correct enough in

their form, conducted with the staff of the delegation, and even with the Minister himself.

Since then, anti-German feelings prevailing in British circles here have increased considerably. All the paraphernalia connected with the rearmament drive, as manifested to-day in the British Press, over the wireless, in public speeches made by the spokesmen of the war party—all directed against Germany—are accurately reflected in the attitude of the British diplomatic mission and of the British colony here. If, in the course of conversations with British people, attention is attracted to the reprehensible and dangerous character of these methods, the only answer is a deprecating shrug of the shoulders or a frosty reply that the armaments race between the nations is bound ultimately to end in war. For these people, Messrs. Eden, Churchill, and Duff Cooper are the real representatives and the future leaders of the British nation.

The effects of this propaganda, so clearly directed against Germany, on our work and our position in Iran should not be underrated. Even though the British, who are feared but by no means popular here, will not easily succeed in seriously endangering our favourable position in economic and cultural spheres, they will, nevertheless, by creating a war psychosis in leading Iran circles, produce a sense of insecurity and of apprehension regarding what is yet to come. This may have disturbing and detrimental effects on the willingness of the Iran Government to enter upon important and long-term economic or transport undertakings with us.

In many other respects, too, the British have recently exhibited a marked anti-German activity. Thus to-day, any new drive on the part of German economic enterprise in Iran is not only subject to espionage in every detail through an excellently organized news service, but is also sabotaged wherever possible.

Smend

B. British encirclement policy after February 1939
Poland's rejection of the German proposals

As early as February the anti-German and pro-war agitation of leading British circles took the form of a revival of the encirclement policy pursued by Britain at the time of the Great War. In the first place the alliance between Britain and France was made more binding and at the same time there was a noticeable tendency to improve the relations between Poland and the Anglo-French allies.

No. 26 (267)

Statement made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, 6 February 1939

Mr. A. Henderson asked the Prime Minister whether the recent statement by the French Foreign Minister that in the case of war the forces of Great Britain would be at the disposal of France, just as all the forces of France would be at the disposal of Great Britain, were in accord with the views of His Majesty's Government?

The Prime Minister: According to my information, Monsieur Bonnet stated in the Chamber of Deputies on 26 January that in the case of a war in which the two countries were involved all the forces of Great Britain would be at the disposal of France just as all the forces of France would be at the disposal of Great Britain. This is in complete accordance with the views of His Majesty's Government. It is impossible to examine in detail all the hypothetical cases which may arise, but I feel bound to make plain that the solidarity of interest, by which France and this country are united, is such that any threat to the vital interests of France from whatever quarter it come must evoke the immediate co-operation of this country.

No. 27 (268)

The German Ambassador in Paris to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, 28 February 1939

Recently and prior to the information concerning the anti-German excesses in Poland, the Embassy received news from an absolutely reliable source which points to certain tendencies towards a revival of the Franco-Polish Alliance and, in line with this, to the intention to allow German-Polish relations to become gradually worse. As the chief reason for this our informant mentions the deep impression made on the Polish Government by the strengthening of the *Entente Cordiale* between France and Britain as well as the various statements by Mr. Chamberlain with regard to English aid for France, to which must be added a remarkable British activity in Poland.

Welczeck

Thus we come to the most important phase of the events leading up to the present war. After the collapse of Czecho-Slovakia, Britain's efforts to encircle Germany were openly acknowledged and the Government declared this to be their policy. In this connection, the attitude adopted by Britain with regard to the dissolution of Czecho-Slovakia is worthy of note. On 15 March, i. e., after the signing of the German-Czech Agreement, Mr. Chamberlain declared in the House of Commons that the British guarantee to Czecho-Slovakia did not apply, since the declaration of independence of Slovakia put an end by internal disruption to the State whose frontiers Britain had proposed to guarantee. "His Majesty's Government cannot accordingly hold themselves any longer bound by this obligation." This official British statement not only coincided with the German view but also with the historical fact that about mid-day on 14 March the disintegration of

Czecho-Slovakia was completed by the Proclamation of Independence by the Slovak Diet.

At this juncture the British pro-war party started a counter-thrust and retained the upper hand. Mr. Chamberlain abandoned his own policy and gave way to the Opposition, which, from that time onwards, took over the reigns of foreign policy, co-operating in complete harmony with the bureaucrats of the Foreign Office. Poland, having up till then hesitated to allow herself to be persuaded to abandon finally the method of amicable settlement with Germany, now definitely identified herself with the encirclement front which was now taking form. It was only as a result of coupling the Polish complex with the British policy of encirclement that problems such as those of Danzig and the Corridor, which although not simple in themselves were yet capable of being solved, became charged with the explosive matter which eventually wrecked the peace first of Eastern and then of Western Europe. Mr. Chamberlain's speech in Birmingham was the final proof of the Prime Minister's capitulation to the political views of the Opposition whose object was to achieve the complete annihilation of Greater Germany. The policy of encirclement which had already been systematically prepared was now applied to its fullest extent.

No. 28 (269)

Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in Birmingham, 17 March 1939

Extract

.... Last Wednesday we had a debate in the House of Commons. That was the day on which the German troops entered Czecho-Slovakia, and all of us, but particularly the Government, were at a disadvantage, because the information that we had was only partial; much of it was unofficial. We had no

time to digest it, much less to form a considered opinion upon it. And so it necessarily followed that I, speaking on behalf of the Government, with all the responsibility that attaches to that position, was obliged to confine myself to a very restrained and cautious exposition, on what at the time I felt I could make but little commentary. And, perhaps naturally, that somewhat cool and objective statement gave rise to a misapprehension, and some people thought that because I spoke quietly, because I gave little expression to feeling, therefore my colleagues and I did not feel strongly on the subject. I hope to correct that mistake to-night. .... Really I have no need to defend my visits to Germany last autumn, for what was the alternative? Nothing that we could have done, nothing that France could have done, or Russia could have done could possibly have saved Czecho-Slovakia from invasion and destruction. Even if we had subsequently gone to war to punish Germany for her actions, and if after the frightful losses which would have been inflicted upon all partakers in the war we had been victorious in the end, never could we have reconstructed Czecho-Slovakia as she was framed by the Treaty of Versailles. .... Germany, under her present régime, has sprung a series of unpleasant surprises upon the world. The Rhineland, the Austrian Anschluß, the severance of Sudetenland—all these things shocked and affronted public opinion throughout the world. Yet, however much we might take exception to the methods which were adopted in each of those cases, there was something to be said, whether on account of racial affinity or of just claims too long resisted—there was something to be said for the necessity of a change in the existing situation.

But the events which have taken place this week seem to fall into a different category, and they must cause us all to be asking ourselves:— "Is this the end of an old adventure, or is it the beginning of a new?"

"Is this the last attack upon a small State, or is it to be

followed by others? Is this, in fact, a step in the direction of an attempt to dominate the world by force?"

Those are grave and serious questions. I am not going to answer them to-night. But I am sure they will require the grave and serious consideration not only of Germany's neighbours, but of others, perhaps even beyond the confines of Europe. Already there are indications that the process has begun, and it is obvious that it is likely now to be speeded up.

We ourselves will naturally turn first to our partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations and to France, to whom we are so closely bound, and I have no doubt that others, too, knowing that we are not disinterested in what goes on in Southeastern Europe, will wish to have our counsel and advice.

In our own country we must all review the position with that sense of responsibility which its gravity demands. Nothing must be excluded from that review which bears upon the national safety. Every aspect of our national life must be looked at again from that angle. . . . .

No. 29 (271)

Extract from a Speech by Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Lords, 20 March 1939

. . . . But if and when it becomes plain to States that there is no apparent guarantee against successive attacks directed in turn on all who might seem to stand in the way of ambitious schemes of domination, then at once the scale tips the other way, and in all quarters there is likely immediately to be found a very much greater readiness to consider whether the acceptance of wider mutual obligations, in the cause of mutual support, is not dictated, if for no other reason than the necessity of self-defence. His Majesty's Government have not failed to draw the moral from these events, and have lost no

time in placing themselves in close and practical consultation, not only with the Dominions, but with other Governments concerned upon the issues that have suddenly been made so plain.....

No. 30 (272)

The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, 20 March 1939

Statements which Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax have just made in Parliament have not yet clarified the intentions of the British Government. Lord Halifax limits himself to an, in some passages bitter, exposition of the events of the last few days. He spoke of the expediency of "wider mutual obligations." An approximate idea of the present state of affairs may be formed from reports received from reliable sources, as follows: — The initiative for entering into discussions rests firmly in the hands of the British Government. They wish to be the first in determining the policy to be followed in order to avoid the other states issuing conditional statements, which, in British opinion, would not attain their aim. The British Government obviously have in mind the drawing of a line of demarcation, especially enclosing Roumania, the crossing of which by an aggressor would lead to war. It is said that the following States have been invited to take part in the question of guarantees, namely: — Russia, Poland, Turkey, and Jugoslavia; it is beyond dispute that Hungary has not been approached; that it has been left to Poland to get into touch with Lithuania, Esthonia, and Latvia; that the same applies to Turkey in regard to Greece; that they are still doubtful with regard to Bulgaria's attitude.

Kordt

No. 31 (274)

The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, 22 March 1939

From a reliable source I have received the following information about the contents of the proposals made by Great Britain in Paris, Warsaw, and Moscow:

The proposed declaration provides that in cases in which there is reason to apprehend aggression the signatories of the declaration bind themselves to immediate consultation, "to resist aggression".

As far as can be seen up to the present, Poland entertains doubts about the British proposal. Moscow has not yet answered.

In case this declaration be accepted by the States concerned, Great Britain wants as a second step to submit a proposal of General Staff talks with the object of military agreements.

Kordt

No. 32 (277)

The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, 29 March 1939

In the House of Commons on 28 March, Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Dalton, Labour Members, submitted questions to the Prime Minister in which they begged for more detailed information about the state of the discussions proceeding at present between the British Government and other Governments.

Mr. Greenwood wanted to know whether the declaration which had been presented to certain Powers dealt solely with consultation, or whether mutual assistance, under certain circumstances even of a military kind, were envisaged.

The Prime Minister replied that it was extraordinarily difficult and delicate to place all the cards on the table at that moment. "It will, at any rate, be readily understood, from what I have said previously, that what the Government have in mind goes a great deal further than consultation."

Mr. Dalton desired to know whether it had been made clear to Poland that the British Government were willing, in conjunction with other Governments, to come to Poland's assistance in the event of her being the next victim of "German aggression". The Prime Minister answered that he felt compelled to maintain a certain reserve on this point, but he was prepared to state that the British Government had left no possibility of doubt in the minds of the Governments with which they stood in consultation, about what the British Government were prepared to do in given circumstances.

By Order
von Selzam

From now onwards it is easy to realize that the British encirclement policy coincided absolutely with an exceedingly provocative attitude on the part of Poland. No reply had as yet been received from Poland regarding the German proposals. On 21 March, therefore, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs again received the Polish Ambassador in order to bring up once more the matter of the German proposals and to inform him that the Fuehrer would welcome another discussion with M. Beck. Although, at this juncture, the British encirclement policy was already being officially pursued, and although, as Documents 29 and 30 (Nos. 272, 273) show, the catchword 'Poland' had already been uttered in the House of Commons, the Reich Government adhered

to their moderate proposals. Poland had no occasion to feel herself threatened in any way by Germany. On the other hand, as early as 9 March, Herr von Moltke, the German Ambassador, was compelled to talk very seriously to M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, with regard to Polish excesses. In spite of this, Poland commenced partial mobilization only a few days later, and on 26 March, the Polish Ambassador finally handed the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs a document which was tantamount to a final rejection of the German proposals. On the very next day, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs was forced to complain to the Polish Ambassador about serious excesses in Bromberg. As is proved by reports and memoranda received at this time from German diplomats, those in power in Warsaw had completely frustrated the efforts hitherto made by Germany to pursue a policy of amicable understanding with Poland. Poland was co-operating wholeheartedly in the British encirclement policy and made no attempt to put a stop to the provocative excesses against the German minority about which detailed reports are given in the third chapter.

No. 33 (155)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, 9 March 1939

In the conversation which I yesterday had with M. Beck I reverted to the demonstrations before the German Embassy, drawing particular attention to the evident sympathy of the police with the demonstrators, as also to the fact that a Polish officer of higher rank in the presence of a trustworthy third person described the demonstrations as being

altogether justified. I declared to M. Beck that the establishment of these two facts, as also other observations of a similar kind, had shown to my regret how narrow the foundation was on which the policy of coming to an understanding was being carried on in Poland. Apart from him himself, and about half a dozen other persons, there was practically no one in Poland who was taking any interest in this matter. One could not then be surprised if the feeling towards Germany were getting continually worse, for the Polish Press did not cease to carry on its agitation. Daily there appeared unfriendly articles not only in the press of the opposition, but also in the provincial organs of the Government, and only the two official newspapers appearing in Warsaw, maintained a comparatively correct attitude. What was still worse, however, was the agitation of the West Marches Society which was stirring up the population against everything German in a very significant way by various kinds of systematic actions. But what was absolutely shocking was the wave of demonstrations which last August had, for three weeks, swept the whole land, as a protest against the pretended brutality of the Germans, and to wit in connection with the sad accident to a Polish railway-man who had fallen out of the train between Danzig and Gdynia, thereby losing both his legs. This agitation had at the time been tolerated by the Government, although it was known to them that the accident, for which the Germans were being blamed, was solely the fault of the Polish railway-man himself, no German having been concerned in the matter. This was the most inconceivable instance of provocative agitation which I had ever experienced.

M. Beck appeared to be considerably affected by these statements and declared again how very much he had regretted the incidents before the German Embassy. He admitted that the police had failed and declared that the guilty police

officer would be put on trial. Apart from this, he was of the opinion that one should not take a too pessimistic view of things. The policy of coming to an understanding was indeed not always easy to carry out, and he was by no means blind to the difficulties. He had had for instance in the year 1936 a great struggle to get this policy, which had been inaugurated by Pilsudski, recognized; since then, however, he was meeting with increasing understanding for it in political circles. The reasons for the feeling having got worse during the last months were, he believed, chiefly connected with the question of the Carpatho-Ukraine, as blame was being attributed to Germany for a common Polish-Hungarian frontier not having been established.

I drew attention to the fact that all ground for such a pretence had been removed by the very clear declarations made at Berchtesgaden, and that it was really time to do something against the poisoning of the atmosphere. At all events we were unable to understand why the agitation in the press was being tolerated by the Government, and why the West Marches Society was being given a free hand in its anti-German actions.

von Moltke

No. 34 (203)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the Polish Ambassador, 21 March 1939

Memo

(Translation)

I requested M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador, to come to see me at noon to-day. I described to him the development of the Czecho-Slovakian question, and declared that, in view of the precipitate nature of events, it had not been possible for me to keep foreign representatives here as well informed

as I would have wished. I had, however, fully informed Ambassador von Moltke, who happened to be in Berlin, and instructed him to enlighten M. Beck, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs. I then described in detail the events which had induced the Fuehrer to intervene.

It had, I said, attracted our notice that the Beneš spirit was astir again in what remained of Czecho-Slovakia. All the warnings the Fuehrer had addressed to M. Chvalkovsky had gone unheeded. The Prague Government had recently tried to take dictatorial action in the Carpatho-Ukraine and Slovakia. Moreover, the oppression of Germans in the linguistic enclaves had recommenced.

I presumed that the settlement which had, meantime, been reached in connection with the Carpatho-Ukrainian question had caused great satisfaction in Poland. The establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia meant the final pacification of this area in conformity with historical principles, and would eventually prove of benefit to all.

Ambassador Lipski then expressed antiety with regard to the fact that Germany had taken over the protection of Slovakia. This news had created a strong impression in Poland, for the man in the street could not help regarding such a step as primarily directed against Poland. The Slovaks, he said, were a people linguistically related to the Poles. Polish interests in that area were also historically justified, and, from a purely realistic political standpoint, it had to be admitted that the proclamation of a Protectorate could only be regarded as a blow at Poland.

I drew Ambassador Lipski's attention to the fact that the independent Slovak Government had appealed to Germany for protection. The proclamation of the Protectorate was certainly not directed against Poland. I gave him clearly to understand that the question might be jointly discussed in the event of general German-Polish relations taking a satis-

factory course; in this connection Poland's participation in the guarantee of the Slovak State might be considered. Unfortunately, however, I had been compelled to recognize that a gradual constraint had manifested itself in German-Polish relations. This development had begun several months ago. In Germany, surprise had been felt at the peculiar attitude displayed by Poland in the Minorities Commission. The Danzig incidents provoked by Polish students had likewise given us food for thought. Ambassador Lipski denied emphatically that incidents of the kind had been caused by Polish students. He likewise denied with spirit my observation that in the Fuehrer's opinion the posters which had led to the incidents had been displayed by Polish students, and maintained that Polish students had not participated in the affair in any way.

I further drew the Polish Ambassador's attention to the continuous press attacks, to the anti-German demonstrations on the occasion of Count Ciano's visit and to the public press campaign now being carried on. This press campaign seemed to me entirely unjustified. The Fuehrer had always worked for a settlement and an understanding with Poland. The Fuehrer was still pursuing this aim, he was, however, increasingly surprised at the Polish attitude. Up to now I had imposed a certain restraint upon the German Press with regard to Poland, as the Polish Ambassador could see for himself by glancing at the German newspapers. It would, however, be impossible for me in the long run to allow such attacks to go unanswered. The probable result of such a reciprocal press campaign would soon be that our mutual relations would touch zero. It seemed to me necessary to make a fresh attempt to put German-Polish policy on the right track, and it appeared to me right and proper that a personal discussion between German and Polish statesmen should take place at an early date.

I added that I should be glad if M. Beck, the Foreign Minister, would shortly visit Berlin, as the Fuehrer had told me that he, too, would warmly welcome such a discussion. Concerning the possible subject of such an exchange of views, M. Lipski declared that he had to admit that Germany was not without a share in the creation and the present existence of Poland, and that Poland owed her present territorial expansion to Germany's greatest misfortune, namely, the fact that Germany had lost the Great War.

The decision regarding the Corridor was, I said, generally accepted as being the heaviest burden placed on Germany by the Peace Treaty of Versailles. No former government could have dared to renounce German claims to revision without finding themselves swept away by the Reichstag within the space of forty-eight hours. The Fuehrer thought otherwise with regard to the Corridor problem. He recognized the justice of the Polish demand for free access to the sea. He was the only German statesman who could venture to renounce possession of the Corridor once and for all. The prerequisite was, however, that the purely German city of Danzig should return to the Reich, and an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection be established between the Reich and East Prussia. The existence of the Corridor was a thorn in the flesh of the German people, of which the sting could only be removed in this way. If the Polish statesmen were to take the real facts into account calmly, a solution could be found on the following basis: — the return of Danzig to the Reich, an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection between the Reich and East Prussia, and, in return, a guarantee of the Corridor. I could well imagine that it would, in such a case, be possible to treat the Slovakian question in the sense referred to.

Ambassador Lipski promised to inform M. Beck accordingly, and then to give me an answer.

I suggested that Ambassador Lipski should go to Warsaw to report in person. I repeated once more how advantageous a final settlement between Germany and Poland appeared to me, particularly at the present juncture. This was also important because up to now the Fuehrer could not help but feel astonished at the peculiar attitude adopted by Poland with regard to a number of questions; it was essential that he should not gain the impression that Poland simply did not want to reach a settlement.

von Ribbentrop

No. 35 (204)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, 24 March 1939

Three or four classes of reservists, i. e., 1911—1914, in addition 1906 and 1907, were called up at short notice from different districts; definitely confirmed. Reserve officers of technical troops called up.

Moltke

No. 36 (206)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, 24 March 1939

The calling up of reservists already reported points to the growing influence of military circles upon the conduct of

Polish foreign policy. For the time being, it is true the position of the Foreign Minister is still strong, as is evident from the arrest of Mackiewicz, a prominent editor, who, although an adherent of Pilsudski's, has become a bitter opponent of M. Beck. It is to be feared, however, that M. Beck will adopt a more extreme course if compelled to do so by the threatened wave of Nationalist feeling.

As to British suggestions in connection with which the British Ambassador repeatedly called at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs during the past few days, nothing definite has so far become known. It is, therefore, impossible to say whether Polish mobilization measures were influenced by this British action. In this connection, a remark made by M. Arciszewski, Under-Secretary of State, to several diplomats here seems worth repeating. In the course of various deprecative remarks about Britain and France, who time and again, without running any risks themselves, had attempted to utilize Poland for ends other than her own, he declared that Poland would never fight merely for the interests of other Powers. In other respects, too, it may be inferred from the general lines of M. Beck's policy that Poland would only unwillingly join any general combination or allow herself to be involved in actions which would compel her to define her position prematurely and clearly. This, of course, does not mean that Poland would not accept British proposals if, as a result of the present negotiations, the possibility were to present itself of obtaining from Great Britain firm promises which would augment her security.

Moltke

No. 37 (207)

Memo by the Director of the Political Department in the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 25 March 1939

The High Command of the Army telephoned me at 11 a. m. yesterday and gave me the following information regarding Polish mobilization measures: —

1. Polish troops about 4,000 strong have been concentrated near Gdynia.
2. The troops of a garrison hitherto stationed in the southern part of the Corridor have been transferred to the immediate vicinity of the Danzig frontier.
3. Poland has mobilized three classes.

All these measures are reported to apply to the northern part of Poland only; in other parts of the country the extent of military measures taken was not yet clearly apparent.

Fürst von Bismarck

No. 38 (208)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the Polish Ambassador, 26 March 1939

Memo

(Translation)

I received M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador, at 12.30 p. m. to-day.

Ambassador Lipski handed me the Polish Government's Memorandum attached hereto, which I read in his presence.

Having taken note of its contents I replied to Ambassador Lipski that, in my personal opinion, the Polish attitude could not be considered a suitable basis for a solution of the Ger-

man-Polish question. The only possible solution of the problem was the re-union of Danzig with the Reich and the construction of an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection between the Reich and East Prussia. M. Lipski replied that it was his painful duty to draw attention to the fact that any further prosecution of these German plans, especially as far as the return of Danzig to the Reich was concerned, meant war with Poland.

I then drew Ambassador Lipski's attention to the reports in hand respecting the concentration of Polish troops and warned him as to the possible consequences. The Polish attitude seemed to me a peculiar reply to my recent offer of a final pacification of German-Polish relations. If things continued like this, a serious situation might soon arise. I was in a position to tell Ambassador Lipski that such action, for example, as a violation of Danzig territory by Polish troops, would be regarded by Germany in the same light as a violation of the frontiers of the Reich.

Ambassador Lipski emphatically denied that Poland had any military designs upon Danzig. The movements of military units carried out by Poland were merely precautionary measures.

I then asked Ambassador Lipski whether the Polish Government would not, as soon as the situation had become somewhat calmer, consider once more the German proposals, in order that a solution might be reached on the basis proposed by us, namely the re-union of Danzig with the Reich and an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection. Ambassador Lipski gave an evasive answer and referred once more to the Memorandum handed over by him.

I replied to Ambassador Lipski that I would first of all report to the Fuehrer. My chief concern was to prevent the Fuehrer from gaining the impression that Poland simply did not want to come to an understanding.

Ambassador Lipski asked me to have the problem studied once more in all its aspects by the German authorities, and he revolved the question in his own mind as to whether there might not be prospects of reaching a solution on the basis of the Polish ideas. He added that M. Beck, Minister for Foreign Affairs, following our suggestion, would like to visit Berlin; it seemed to him, however, appropriate that prior to his visit, all questions involved should have been adequately prepared by diplomatic channels.

At the close of our conversation I made it absolutely clear to Ambassador Lipski that, in my opinion, the Polish proposals could not be regarded as satisfactory by the Fuehrer. Only the unconditional return of Danzig to the Reich, an extra-territorial connection with East Prussia, a 25 years' non-aggression pact with frontier guarantees, and co-operation in the Slovakian question in the form of a joint protection of this territory to be undertaken by the adjoining states could, according to the German conception, lead to a final settlement.

von Ribbentrop

No. 39 (209)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the Polish Ambassador, 27 March 1939

Memo by Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs called the Polish Ambassador to account respecting the outrages in Bromberg and remarked that these new excesses had created a disastrous impression in Germany, since the prevailing opinion here was that they were, to a certain degree, tolerated by the Polish authorities. The offenders had once again been the West Marches Society, of which Germany had already so often

complained to Poland. In Germany people were of the opinion that if only the Polish Government were willing, they were definitely in a position to prevent such incidents. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs most keenly regretted such a development in German-Polish relations and emphasized that the German Government must hold the Polish Government fully responsible for such occurrences.

The Polish Ambassador declared that he had no knowledge of the incidents mentioned, but promised to make immediate enquiries. He, too, regretted the excesses but explained them away by the state of tension prevailing in Poland at the time. Moreover, he promised, for his part, to do everything in his power to prevent a repetition of such incidents.

When the Polish Ambassador asserted that similar incidents of an anti-Polish nature also occurred at German Club meetings, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs at once replied that, so far, provocation had always come exclusively from the Polish side.

To the Polish Ambassador's question as to whether it might not be advisable to address "a few re-assuring words to both nations", the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs answered that nothing of that kind would in any way meet the situation; for, as he had already said, the acts of provocation and press attacks had, so far, come exclusively from the Polish side. If the German Press now began to reply to Polish attacks, which he feared would soon be impossible to prevent, it would do so thoroughly.

In conclusion the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs remarked that he no longer knew what to make of the attitude of the Polish Government. They had given a negative answer to the generous proposals which Germany had made to Poland. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs could in no wise regard the proposal submitted by the Polish Ambassador yesterday as a basis for the settlement of existing

problems. The relations between the two countries were therefore becoming more and more critical.

When taking his leave, the Polish Ambassador promised for his part to do everything in his power to overcome the difficulties.

Schmidt

No. 40 (349)

The German Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, 27 March 1939

According to a report from the German Passport Office at Bromberg, an anti-German demonstration organized by the notorious Polish West Marches Society and attended by about 10,000 persons took place at Bromberg at noon on 26 March. The semi-military organizations in Bromberg, including those of the railway and postal officials, played a prominent part in this demonstration. In the course of this demonstration both the German Reich and the German minority in Poland were the subject of violent attacks in two speeches. From the participants came shouts such as: "Down with Hitler", "We want Danzig", "We want Königsberg". According to the Passport Office the Polish police had difficulty in protecting German property from the violence of the excited mob.

In addition, it is said that members of the German minority in the Voivodeship of Thorn are exposed to constantly increasing hostility. Particularly the boycott of Germans, systematically prepared by the West Marches Society and other organizations, has during the past few days assumed dimensions hitherto unknown. Though the Polish authorities

try to prevent excesses against individuals, the boycott actions as such are obviously tolerated by them.

With reference to the repeated complaints previously made to the Polish Government concerning the conduct of the West Marches Society, I request you to make emphatic representations also in respect of the recent boycotts.

By Order
Bergmann

No. 41 (210)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, 28 March 1939

The excitement which has prevailed in Poland for some time has increased considerably. The wildest rumours are being spread among the population, e. g., that there have been fights between German and Polish troops in Oderberg, that Foreign Minister Beck has been arrested, and similar phantastic reports. Of graver significance is the development of a pro-war feeling which is being fostered by the Press, by anti-German public demonstrations, especially in the provinces, which have already led to numerous incidents, and partly also by sabre-rattling semi-official propaganda. The bulk of the population to-day believes that war has become inevitable and imminent.

The practical measures adopted by the Government help to aggravate the existing war psychosis. In the course of last week, the 1912, 1913 and 1914 classes of reservists were called up and also sections of other classes of reservists, for special formations. Furthermore, horses and motor-lorries

have been requisitioned. In addition the Government have made the present situation a pretext for raising an internal State Loan for the expansion of the Air Force and the Anti-aircraft Artillery.

A frequently reprinted article which appeared in the military paper, *Polska Zbrojna,* and entitled, "We are prepared", is particularly characteristic of the style of official propaganda on behalf of military preparedness. This article states that the Poles, unlike the Czechs, had no feeling of inferiority as regards the powerful nations of the world. The number of foreign divisions did not frighten the Poles, for their own army, its equipment and the heroic spirit of the Polish nation were sufficient to assure victory to Poland. Numerous other publications, which have since been appearing daily in the Press, are written in the same spirit and tone.

In view of the Polish national character, this self-assurance and over-estimation of their own military strength, as expressed in the Press, constitute a danger. That this is not merely press propaganda is proved by a remark made by M. Gluchowski, Vice-Minister for War, in the course of a serious conversation, and reported from a reliable source, to the effect that the German armed forces were one big bluff, as Germany lacked trained reserves with which to bring her units up to strength. When asked whether he seriously believed Poland to be superior to Germany, from a military point of view, M. Gluchowski answered, "Why, certainly".

An anti-German demonstration arranged at the last plenary session of the Senate is also characteristic of the atmosphere prevailing in political circles. The first reading of the Polish-Lithuanian Commercial Treaty, on which occasion M. Saulys, the Lithuanian Minister, was present in the diplomats' box, gave Senator Katelbach occasion to assure Lithuania in the name of the Senate that Poland most strongly sympathized with Lithuania in the arduous experiences which she had just gone through. The two Ministers

who had appeared at the meeting and Count Szembek, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, also participated in the "prolonged cheering" called forth by this statement.

von Moltke

No. 42 (211)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, 29 March 1939

Last night M. Beck, Minister for Foreign Affairs, asked me to call on him in order to inform me of the following: In the conversation of 26 March the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs had declared to Ambassador Lipski that a Polish *coup de force* against Danzig would mean a *casus belli.* This communication compelled him to declare for his part that if Germany should attempt to alter the statute of the Free City, by unilateral action, Poland would regard this as a *casus belli.* The same would be the case if the Danzig Senate should make such an attempt. Beck added that the Polish Government regretted the present aggravation of the situation.

I answered Beck that the aggravation had not been caused by us, but solely by the Polish mobilization measures, which were quite unjustified and liable to have most dangerous consequences. As a result of the warlike atmosphere caused by this and increased by press and propaganda in a most irresponsible manner, a situation fraught with grave dangers had already been created. The serious incidents in Pommerellen proved this clearly. I drew special attention to the unheard-of outrages in Bromberg and Liniewo and stated

that I would refer to the matter again after having received more detailed information.

Beck tried to justify the mobilization measures by stating that after the events in Czecho-Slovakia and in the Memel district, the claim raised at this very moment with regard to Danzig had been interpreted as a danger-signal by Poland. The fear that difficulties might arise from these measures was unfounded. As yet he knew nothing of the incidents at Liniewo. The incident at Bromberg where, by the way, the police had energetically intervened, had been made the subject of a ministerial conference. Subsequently the Premier had given the strictest orders to all administrative authorities to avoid everything that might be the cause of incidents, and particularly to forbid meetings and demonstrations.

Beck added that he did not wish to conceal the fact from me that he was more and more under the impression that German-Polish relations had reached a turning point. — I reminded him of the conversation at Berchtesgaden, in which the Fuehrer had expressly emphasized the maintenance of a policy of understanding, and explained that the very aim of the present proposals was to put German-Polish relations on a sound and lasting basis; it is true, we expected a better understanding on the Polish side.

Moltke

No. 43 (354)

The German Consul-General at Thorn to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, 30 March 1939

The recent aggravation of the anti-German feeling in Pommerellen finds expression in a growing boycott movement a continued campaign of hate, and numerous acts of

violence. The economic boycott is making itself especially felt in the towns of Graudenz and Bromberg, and, according to statements made by members of the German minority, has already caused considerable damage to the business of German tradespeople. In Bromberg various Polish military associations have issued an appeal calling for the complete economic and cultural boycott of the German minority, and the elimination of the German influence on film and press.

In the course of recent demonstrations, in which police officials frequently took part, the crowd repeatedly shouted demands, such as, "Kick the Germans out", and "Danzig and Flatow must become Polish". In many places the window-panes of German houses were smashed, an act in which officials, such as parish magistrates, also took part. In reply to protests made by a German, one of these magistrates said that he could not help it, and that he had not been the instigator of such demonstrations on his own account, but that orders to that effect had been received, and that the men in higher positions, while pretending to be negotiating in Berlin and Warsaw, had secretly given orders to make a clean sweep.

For the Consul-General
Graf

No. 44 (355)

The German Consul-General in Posen to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, 31 March 1939

For months the Polish Press has been at work in the western districts, poisoning public opinion against the Germans. At one time it demands stringent measures against the

German minority in Poland, at another a boycott of German goods and German shops, or launches general attacks against the German minority and the policy of the Reich. This anti-German agitation which has been steadily growing, especially since the September crisis of last year, has now, in obvious connection with the development of the political situation in Europe, led to an explosion. The Press gives unrestrained expression to its anti-German feeling, and hardly a day passes on which the Posen newspapers do not publish more or less aggressive articles or insulting remarks about the German minority. Although the excesses in Posen lasted only about a week, it cannot be said that the anti-German agitation has abated. In the city of Posen things have, to all appearances, quieted down, at least, acts of violence have, on the whole, ceased. The day before yesterday a few window-panes were smashed in a German bank building, in German book-shops, and in the house of a Protestant minister. The Consulate-General is still under increased police protection. However, in other towns and in country districts excesses have continued; German shop-keepers' windows were smashed, German shop-signs painted over, walls of houses besmirched, and meetings of members of the German minority disturbed. In some cases boycott-pickets have been posted. The hostile feeling has penetrated even to the most remote village.

Walther

No. 45 (212)

Memo by the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 6 April 1939

To-day the Polish Ambassador, whom I had asked to call on me, of his own accord turned the conversation to M. Beck's conversations in London. M. Lipski said that he had had no

detailed information, but was in a position to state certain principles.

1. Poland wished to stand by the 1934 Agreement.
2. The Polish-British arrangements were of a bilateral and purely defensive character; there was no question of Poland's joining a *bloc*.

I listened to M. Lipski's remark with a slight smile and answered somewhat as follows: Recent developments of Polish policy were no longer comprehensible to me. M. Lipski knew as well as I did how strained our relations had been before the National-Socialist Government came into power. No one in Germany but the Fuehrer could have conceived the great ideas of the year 1934 and carried them out in collaboration with Poland. After that date our relations had shown a steady and gratifying improvement. With the purpose of furthering this good-neighbourly feeling the Fuehrer had, as is well known, initiated conversations with Poland with the desire not only of clearing away the last points of dissension between our two countries, but also of magnanimously guaranteeing the Corridor frontier to Poland. Poland had obviously not understood this offer. Instead of accepting it eagerly and thus completing the work of 1934 we had suddenly heard a rather odd swashbuckling on the part of Poland. This has not, it is true, excited us, but it was in strange contrast to the answer which we might have expected from Warsaw. According to my instructions I said that the Fuehrer's offer to Poland had been made only this once. The sort of reply which the Polish Government had given us to this offer, had been, as is known, already characterized to him—M. Lipski—by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs on 27 March as no basis for a settlement of the matter in question. (Later, in the course of the conversation, I repeated that for us the Polish answer was no basis for a discussion.) Whether Poland had been well-

advised in taking up this attitude the future would show. I went on to say that I had not yet read M. Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons which had been announced for this afternoon. If, however, what had already appeared in the press about M. Beck's conversations were correct I did not know how the Polish attitude could any longer be reconciled with the spirit of the 1934 Agreement.

To the last point M. Lipski thought fit to reply that the existing Polish-French treaty had also been compatible with the Agreement of 1934. M. Lipski endeavoured to represent the Polish concentration of troops in the neighbourhood of Danzig as a comprehensible parallel to troop movements in other countries—such as Hungary, Roumania, even Norway. Above all M. Lipski declared that we had maintained no contact with him at the time when the German army marched into Czecho-Slovakia, and that this, in contrast to last September, had led to comprehensible nervousness in Poland. The ultimatum Germany had addressed to Lithuania had further increased Polish fears.

I cut M. Lipski short when he spoke of an "ultimatum" to Lithuania, ridiculed his remarks as to troop movements in other countries—which had never been directed against Poland —, and declared that I should not have been surprised if he had thanked us for not having opposed Warsaw's ardent wish for a common Hungarian-Polish Frontier. In short, I calmly refuted M. Lipski's phrases with the obvious arguments, after which we parted. Weizsäcker

Poland's rejection of the German offer was not merely the outcome of Polish arrogance but in the first place also of Britain's plan to make Poland the chief factor in the encirclement policy. Co-operation between the British and Polish Governments left nothing to be desired. On 17 March, Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at Birmingham, openly avowed himself

in favour of the anti-German policy (No. 28), and on 20 March, Lord Halifax referred to the consultations which had already taken place with those Powers which were regarded as possible supporters of the encirclement policy, among whom Poland was singled out to play an important part (No. 29). On 24 March, the German Ambassador in Warsaw reported that the British Ambassador had paid several visits to the Polish Foreign Office during the past few days (No. 36), and on 26 March, Poland rejected the German proposals (No. 39). The Polish Government suddenly chose to regard these moderate German proposals, which Poland had, hitherto, by no means regarded as a menace to herself, as constituting a threat and adopted a provocative tone (No. 41). On 31 March, however, Mr. Chamberlain formally gave Poland carte blanche *by making that notorious declaration to the House of Commons by which, as Mr. Duff Cooper wrote at the time, the fate of the British Empire and the responsibility for peace or war was "entrusted to a handful of unknown persons in Poland."*

No. 46 (279)

Statement made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, 31 March 1939

As I said this morning, His Majesty's Government have no official confirmation of the rumours of any projected attack on Poland and they must not, therefore, be taken as accepting them as true.

I am glad to take this opportunity of stating again the general policy of His Majesty's Government. They have constantly advocated the adjustment, by way of free negotiation between the parties concerned, of any differences that may arise between them. They consider that this is the natural and proper course where differences exist. In their opinion

there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means, and they would see no justification for the substitution of force or threats of force for the method of negotiation.

As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other Governments. In order to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty's Government in the meantime before those consultations are concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government.

As early as 29 March, M. Beck had said to the German Ambassador that he was gradually gaining the impression "that we had arrived at a turning-point in German-Polish relations" (No. 42). In London, too, people were aware of the fundamental change in British policy and of the risk Britain was incurring by giving Poland carte blanche. *On 3 April, Mr. Chamberlain made the following statement when speaking in the House of Commons:*

No. 47 (283)

Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, 3 April 1939

Extract

.... If, as I hope may be the case, the result of this Debate is to show that fundamentally and generally this House is

unanimous in its approval of the declaration which I made on Friday, and is united and determined to take whatever measures may be necessary to make that declaration effective, the Debate may well serve a very useful purpose. The declaration that I made on Friday has been described, in a phrase so apt that it has been widely taken up, as a cover note issued in advance of the complete insurance policy. I myself emphasized its transitional or temporary character, and the description of it as a cover note is not at all a bad one so far as it goes; but where I think it is altogether incomplete is that, while of course, the issue of a cover note does imply that it is to be followed by something more substantial, it is the nature of the complete insurance policy which is such a tremendous departure from anything which this country has undertaken hitherto.

It does really constitute a new point—I would say a new epoch—in the course of our foreign policy.

. . . . Indeed, to have departed from our traditional ideas in this respect so far as I did on behalf of His Majesty's Government on Friday constitutes a portent in British policy so momentous that I think it is safe to say it will have a chapter to itself when the history books come to be written. . . . .

Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking on the same day, expressed similar views:

No. 48 (284)

Extract from a Speech by Sir John Simon, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the House of Commons, 3 April 1939

. . . . . With one or two exceptions, which only emphasize the general unity, we may mark this day as a date in our history when there has been accepted and approved in every

part of the House this immensely significant statement. I am not disposed to belittle its importance. It is a statement which commits us specifically in a quarter of the world in which we have hitherto been freed from specific commitments, and it presages commitments in other quarters also. It is writing a chapter in our history which carries us further than the catalogue of commitments which my right hon. Friend set out in a classic speech at Leamington. Here we are registering that in taking this stand the country as a whole is more united than on any other contemporary question of policy. That is a most tremendous fact which we shall all have occasion to remember hereafter, and I consider it to be the duty of all of us not to minimize this change in the least, but to recognize it and acknowledge it to the full extent of its application. It proclaims a definite course of action if need arises, and from that decision there can be no looking back.

It is the most serious commitment because it not merely threatens the possibility in certain events of war, but it binds us in certain events to undertake war. . . . . .

The obligation to undertake war was intentionally entered upon wherever Britain needed it as a pretext for gaining control in Central and Eastern Europe and as a means for bringing about a preventive war. This was fully confirmed on 6 April at the meeting of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. At the same time, M. Beck's visit to London was utilized for the purpose of replacing the unilateral guarantee given to Poland by Britain on 31 March by a bilateral agreement. Once again, Britain, in full cognizance of the importance of her action, empowered Poland to decide unconditionally on the issue of peace or war. At the same time, Britain was endeavouring to include other countries apart from Poland in the encirclement front. Thus, on 13 April 1939, Britain made a unilateral guarantee declaration in favour of Greece and Roumania. In addition, Mr. Eden and Mr.

Churchill attempted to induce Russia to join the encirclement front, a move which proved popular in Britain. The Roumanian-Polish alliance, the objective of which had hitherto been Eastern Europe, was also to be transformed into an instrument directed against Germany.

During the month of April, Britain's encirclement policy and Poland's determination not to come to an amicable settlement with Germany, had become so obvious that the Reich Government were compelled to take certain steps, rendered inevitable by the Anglo-Polish policy, with regard to both parties. Consequently, in his speech to the Reichstag on 28 April 1939, the Fuehrer was forced to declare that the British and Polish Governments had unilaterally terminated the Anglo-German Naval Agreement and also the German-Polish Agreement of 1934. The most important sections of the Fuehrer's speech referring to Poland and Britain are quoted in the following extract:

No. 49 (214, 295)

Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, 28 April 1939.
Extract

(Translation)

...... There is little to be said as regards German-Polish relations. Here, too, the Treaty of Versailles—of course intentionally—inflicted a most severe wound on Germany. The strange way in which the Corridor, giving Poland access to the sea, was marked out was meant above all to prevent for all time the establishment of an understanding between Poland and Germany. This problem is—as I have already stressed—perhaps the most painful of all problems for Germany. Nevertheless I have never ceased to uphold the view that the necessity of free access to the sea for the Polish State cannot

be ignored, and that as a general principle, which also applies to this case, nations whom Providence has destined or, if you like, condemned to live side by side would be well advised not to make life unnecessarily harder for each other.

The late Marshal Pilsudski, who was of the same opinion, was prepared to go into the question of taking the sting out of German-Polish relations, and finally to conclude an Agreement whereby Germany and Poland expressed their intention of renouncing war altogether as a means of settling the questions which concerned them both. This Agreement contained one single exception which was in practice conceded to Poland. It was laid down that the pacts of mutual assistance already entered into by Poland—the pact with France was meant—should not be affected by the Agreement. But it was obvious that this could apply only to the pact of mutual assistance already concluded beforehand, and not to any new pacts which might be concluded in the future. It is a fact that the German-Polish Agreement contributed to a very remarkable *détente* in the European situation.

Nevertheless there remained one open question between Germany and Poland, which sooner or later quite naturally had to be solved—the question of the German city of Danzig. Danzig is a German city and wishes to belong to Germany. On the other hand, this city has treaties with Poland which, it is true, were forced upon it by the dictators of Versailles. But since the League of Nations, formerly the greatest fomenter of trouble, is now represented by a High Commissioner of extraordinary tact, the problem of Danzig must in any case come up for discussion, to be solved at the latest when this calamitous institution finally comes to an end. I regarded the peaceful settlement of this problem as a further contribution to a final relaxation of European tension. For this *détente* is assuredly not to be achieved by the agitations of demented war-mongers, but by the removal of real elements of danger.

After the problem of Danzig had been discussed several times some months ago, I have now made a concrete offer to the Polish Government. I will reveal this offer to you, members of the Reichstag, and you yourselves shall judge whether it does not represent the greatest concession conceivable in the interests of European peace. As I have already pointed out, I have always seen that an outlet to the sea was absolutely necessary for Poland and have consequently taken this necessity into consideration. I am no democratic statesman, but a National Socialist and a realist. I consider it however necessary to make it clear to the Government in Warsaw that just as they desire access to the sea, so Germany needs access to her province of East Prussia. Now these are all difficult problems. It is not Germany who is responsible for them however, but rather the jugglers of Versailles, who in maliciousness and thoughtlessness deposited hundreds of powder barrels all over Europe, each equipped with a hardly extinguishable lighted fuse.

These problems cannot be solved according to old-fashioned theories; I think, rather, that we should adopt new methods. Poland's access to the sea by way of the Corridor, and on the other hand a German route through the Corridor have no kind of military importance whatsoever. Their importance is exclusively psychological and economic. To accord military importance to a traffic route of this kind, would be to show oneself completely ignorant of military affairs.

I have now had the following proposal presented to the Polish Government:

1. Danzig returns as a Free State into the framework of the German Reich.

2. Germany receives a route through the Corridor and a railway line at her own disposal, having the same extra-territorial status for Germany as the Corridor itself has for Poland.

In return Germany is prepared:

1. to recognize all Polish economic rights in Danzig,
2. to ensure for Poland a Free Harbour in Danzig of any size desired to which she (Poland) would have completely free access,
3. thereupon to accept the frontiers between Germany and Poland and to regard them as final,
4. to conclude a 25-year non-aggression pact with Poland, that is, a pact which would extend far beyond the duration of my own life, and
5. to safeguard the independence of the Slovak State jointly with Poland and Hungary which means in practice the renunciation of any unilateral German hegemony in this territory.

The Polish Government have rejected my offer and have only declared that they are prepared

1. to negotiate concerning the question of a substitute for the League Commissioner and
2. to consider facilities for transit traffic through the Corridor.

I sincerely regretted this attitude of the Polish Government which was incomprehensible to me, but that alone is not the decisive factor. Far worse is the fact that Poland, like Czecho-Slovakia a year ago, now believes, under the pressure of lying international agitation, that she must call up troops, although Germany on her part has not called up a single man and has not thought of taking any kind of action against Poland. As I have said, this is in itself very regrettable and posterity will one day decide whether it was really right to refuse this proposition made this once by me. This—as I have said—was an endeavour on my part to solve a question, intimately affecting the whole German people, by a truly unique compromise, and to solve it to the advantage of both countries.

According to my conviction Poland was by no means the giver in this solution but only the receiver, because there can scarcely be two opinions on the question that Danzig will never become Polish.

Germany's alleged aggressive intentions, a mere figment of the international press, led, as you know, to the so-called guarantee offers and to Poland's incurring an obligation for mutual assistance, which would also under certain circumstances compel her to take military action against Germany in the event of a conflict between Germany and any other Power, in which Britain, in her turn, would be involved.

This obligation is contrary to the Agreement which I made with Marshal Pilsudski some years ago, for in this Agreement reference is made exclusively to obligations existing at that time, namely to the obligations of Poland towards France of which we were aware.

A subsequent extension of these obligations is contrary to the terms of the German-Polish non-aggression pact.

If the conditions then had been what they are to-day, I should never have signed the pact. What sense can non-aggression pacts have if one party in practice claims that innumerable cases must be regarded as exceptions. There is either collective security, which means collective insecurity and continuous danger of war, or clear agreements which must fundamentally exclude any use of arms between the contracting parties.

I therefore look upon the Agreement which Marshal Pilsudski and I formerly concluded as having been unilaterally infringed by Poland and thereby no longer in existence.

I have sent a communication to this effect to the Polish Government. However, I can only repeat at this point that this does not constitute a modification of my attitude in principle with regard to the problems mentioned above.

Should the Polish Government wish to come to fresh contractual arrangements concerning their relations with Germany, I can but welcome such an idea, provided, of course, that the arrangements are based on an absolutely clear obligation binding both parties in equal measure. Germany for her part is perfectly willing at any time to undertake such obligations and also to fulfill them . . .

How sincere was the wish of the Reich Government to establish friendly relations with Britain even at the time when Britain had, by her guarantee to Poland, openly expressed her desire to annihilate Germany, is proved by those sections of the same speech in which the Fuehrer referred to Britain:

. . . During the whole of my political activity I have always stood for the idea of close friendship and collaboration between Germany and Britain. In my movement I found innumerable others of like mind. Perhaps they joined me because of my attitude in this matter. This desire for Anglo-German friendship and co-operation conforms not merely to my sentiments, which result from the origins of our two peoples, but also to my realization of the importance of the existence of the British Empire for the whole of mankind.

I have never left room for any doubt of my belief that the existence of this Empire is an inestimable factor of value for the whole of human cultural and economic life. By whatever means Great Britain acquired her colonial territories—and I know that they were always those of force and very often extreme brutality—nevertheless, I am well aware that no other Empire has ever come into being in any other way, and that in the final resort it is not so much the methods that are taken into account in history as success,

and not the success of the methods as such, but rather the general good which has accrued form such methods.

Now, there is no doubt that the Anglo-Saxon people have accomplished colonizing work of immeasurable value in the world. For this work I have a sincere admiration. The thought of destroying this labour would and does appear to me, seen from a higher human point of view, as nothing but the effluence of human wanton destructiveness. This my sincere respect for this achievement does not, however, mean that I will neglect to secure the life of my own people.

I regard it as impossible to achieve a lasting friendship between the German and Anglo-Saxon peoples, if the other side does not recognize that there are not only British but also German interests, that not only is the preservation of the British Empire the meaning and purpose of the lives of Britishers, but also that for Germans the freedom and preservation of the German Reich is their life purpose. A genuine, lasting friendship between these two nations is only conceivable on the basis of mutual regard.

The British nation rules a great Empire. It built up this Empire at a time when the German nation was internally weak. Previously Germany had been a great Empire. At one time she ruled the Occident. In bloody struggles and religious dissensions and as a result of internal political disintegration, this empire declined in power and greatness, and finally fell into a deep sleep. But, when this old empire appeared to have reached its end, the seeds of its rebirth were already springing up. From Brandenburg and Prussia there arose a new Germany, the Second Reich, and out of it has grown at last the German People's Reich.

I hope that all British people understand that we do not possess the slightest feeling of inferiority to Britishers. Our historical past is too tremendous for that!

Britain has given the world many great men, and Germany no fewer. The severe struggle to maintain the life of our

people has in the course of three centuries cost us a sacrifice in lives which, given only for the defence of the Reich, far exceeds that which other peoples have had to make in order to maintain their existence. If Germany, a country which was for ever being attacked, was not able to retain her possessions, but was compelled to sacrifice many of her provinces, this was due solely to her political misdevelopment and resulting impotence! That condition has now been overcome. Therefore, we Germans do not feel in the least inferior to the British nation. Our self-esteem is just as great as an Englishman's pride in England. In the history of our people, now of some two thousand years' standing, there are deeds and events enough to fill us with sincere pride.

Now, if Britain cannot appreciate our point of view, but thinks perchance that she may regard Germany as a vassal State, then, of course, our affection and friendship have been offered in vain. We shall not despair or lose heart on that account, but—relying on the consciousness of our own strength and on the strength of our friends—we shall then find ways and means to secure our independence without impairing our dignity.

I have heard the statement of the British Prime Minister to the effect that he is unable to put any trust in German assurances. Under these circumstances I regard it as a matter of course that we should no longer expect him or the British people to accept the implications of a situation which is only conceivable in an atmosphere of mutual confidence.

When Germany became National Socialist and thus paved the way for her national resurrection, in pursuance of my unswerving policy of friendship with Britain, on my own initiative, I made a proposal for a voluntary restriction of German naval armaments. That restriction was, however, based on one condition, namely, the will and the conviction that a war between Britain and Germany would never again

be possible. This will and this conviction are still mine to-day.

I am, however, now compelled to state that the policy of Britain is both unofficially and officially leaving no doubt but that such a conviction is no longer shared in London, and that, on the contrary, the opinion prevails there that, no matter in what conflict Germany might some day be entangled, Great Britain would always have to take her stand against Germany. Thus a war against Germany is taken for granted in that country. I profoundly regret such a development, for the only claim I have ever made, and shall continue to make, on Britain is that for the return of our colonies. But I made it perfectly clear that this would never become the cause of a military conflict. I have always held that the British, to whom those colonies are of no value, would one day appreciate the German position and would then value German friendship higher than the possession of territories which, while yielding no real profit whatever to them, are of vital importance to Germany.

Apart from this, however, I have never advanced a claim which might in any way have interfered with British interests or have become a danger to the British Empire and thus have done any kind of harm to Britain. I have always kept within the bounds of such demands as are most intimately connected with Germany's living space and thus with the eternal property of the German nation. Since Britain to-day, both through the press and officially, expresses the view that Germany should be opposed under all circumstances, and confirms this by the policy of encirclement known to us, the basis for the Naval Treaty has been removed. I have, therefore, resolved to send to-day a communication to this effect to the British Government.

This is to us not a matter of practical material importance —for I still hope that we shall be able to avoid an arma-

ments race with Britain—but a matter of self-respect. Should the British Government, however, wish to enter once more into negotiations with Germany on this problem, no one would be happier than I at the prospect of perhaps still being able to come to a clear and straightforward understanding.

Moreover, I know my people—and I rely on them. We do not want anything that did not formerly belong to us, and no State will ever be robbed by us of its property; but whoever believes that he is able to attack Germany will find himself confronted with a measure of power and resistance compared with which that of 1914 was negligible. . . . .

In his speech in the Reichstag on 28 April, the Fuehrer wrote 'finis' to six years of sincere and patient endeavour to secure the friendship of Poland. Nevertheless, even at this moment, he once again made offers of peace and declared himself prepared, in the name of Germany, to discuss a new treaty. Poland did not make use of this opportunity, but chose to reply by a haughty speech from M. Beck on 5 May, by increased anti-German agitation and by an unending stream of war-mongering speeches and newspaper articles. Finally it was admitted in well-informed Polish circles that M. Beck had capitulated not only to Polish chauvinism but also to the British encirclement policy.

No. 50 (216)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, 23 May 1939

Some days ago I had an opportunity of conversing with the Under-Secretary of State, M. Arciszewski. The following points of the conversation struck me as noteworthy:

Obviously it was a matter of importance to M. Arciszewski to make it clear that the change of Polish policy, as expressed by the British-Polish guarantee declaration, could not be traced to the personal initiative of M. Beck. M. Beck had most reluctantly joined in this policy under pressure of the army and of public opinion. He had in the end no longer been in a position to refuse the British offer. But he had again and again postponed public discussion of the matter, which, in view of the general atmosphere prevalent here, appeared inopportune, until the Fuehrer's speech had compelled him to reply. His answer before the Sejm, in which he was forced to defend a policy which was not his own, as well as the enthusiasm his speech had caused among the Polish public, had only filled M. Beck with bitterness. M. Arciszewski then dramatically described how M. Beck, the day after his speech in the Sejm, in a fit of rage had thrown a whole pile of congratulatory telegrams into a corner. Even to-day M. Beck was fundamentally an adherent of the former policy. It struck him as particularly foolish that it should be just the two comparatively poor countries, Germany and Poland, that were to fight one another, a development which, after all, was only in the interest of the rich countries.

This version may be slightly coloured. Yet various observations made coincide in so far as M. Beck, in the course of the last few months, had lost more and more followers in pursuing the policy towards Germany initiated by Marshal Pilsudski. When later on there was the possibility of obtaining a British guarantee for the Polish western frontiers, it was obviously military circles who brought about this change of policy. M. Beck then saw himself forced to join in this policy, if only for the reason that otherwise he could not have kept his position.

von Moltke

In May, Poland finally rejected Germany's proposal for an amicable agreement. Britain allowed four months to elapse without doing anything to persuade Poland to take steps with regard to the resumption of negotiations with Germany. On the contrary, the effect of Britain's support made itself felt in the overbearing attitude of the Poles. At the beginning of May, this state of affairs was the subject of a conversation between M. Coulondre, the French Ambassador, and Baron von Weizsäcker, State Secretary, who drew attention to the Polish attitude. Meantime, however, Britain was relentlessly pursuing her policy of encircling the Axis Powers. As early as 12 May, Mr. Chamberlain intimated in the House of Commons that a temporary Anglo-Turkish agreement of mutual assistance had been reached whilst, on the other hand, Britain and France were carrying to the verge of self-abasement their efforts to win over the Soviet Union. At that time, a telegram sent by the German Consul-General in New York to the German Foreign Office made it perfectly clear that the conviction existed in American circles that Britain intended in any case to strike.

No. 51 (304)

The German Consul-General in New York to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

New York, 25 May 1939

A leading American business man on his return from Europe, confidentially expressed his opinion to friends that at the present time war threatened more from Great Britain than from Germany. He said that the British Government to-day were determined once and for all to put a stop to the

continuous international tension with its elements of danger to the security of the British Empire, and would take the first opportunity Germany gave to force a decision. This merely presumed the successful conclusion of the pact with Soviet Russia. This confidential report was coupled with the recommendation as soon as possible to make business arrangements appropriate to this situation.

The business man is said to have mentioned September as a favourable time for British action, while other reports from Wall Street mention a later date, perhaps October.

A recent declaration of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, warning British business circles from further investment of capital in American securities, lest it should denude the British money market, is looked upon as a confirmation of these views by circles in close touch with Wall Street.

The same circles also consider the article worthy of attention which has been published in the *Saturday Evening Post* by the American journalist, Demaree Bess, of Paris. According to this, last winter already a high British naval officer stated that a deliberate provocation of Germany was Great Britain's only way out. This view, so Mr. Bess declares, has gained ground in London considerably since the establishment of the Bohemian Protectorate. Borchers

It is a fact that, from the beginning of 1939, certain leading British politicians had taken pains to fling insults and challenges at Germany and the Fuehrer, in a way unprecedented in Anglo-German relations.

During June, a final agreement was reached between Mr. Chamberlain, that is to say the British Government, and the Churchill-Eden faction, the only possible basis for such an agreement being a preventive war waged by Britain against Germany. Finally, on 23 June, a Franco-Turkish declaration of

mutual assistance was made, complementary to the Anglo-Turkish Agreement of 12 May. At the end of June, Lord Halifax made his well-known speech at Chatham House, in which he officially announced Britain's preparedness for war, whilst at the same time, general staff discussions were being held between Britain and France concerning the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief for the combined British and French forces in the event of war.

No. 52 (313)

The German Ambassador in London to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, 29 June 1939

General Gamelin's visit to London at the beginning of June served without doubt as an opportunity for discussing among other questions that of the common Command-in-Chief. On this occasion the various probable theatres of war (Western Europe, the Western Mediterranean, the Near East and the Far East) were discussed.

The final result is not known. One is justified in assuming, however, that the Chief Command in Western Europe will be placed in French hands. The question of the Commander-in-Chief's responsibility to an inter-allied body has, however, apparently not yet been settled. As questions put in Parliament prove, great importance is attached to this on the part of Britain. In the House of Commons, on 14 June, the Prime Minister confined himself to imparting only very guarded information on the subject, from which it may be assumed that the question of the Command-in-Chief was not finally settled at that time. From what I hear, the French are said

to have proved very difficult, making exaggerated claims, so that the British are by no means entirely satisfied.

The Staff talks just concluded in Singapore must also be regarded as part of the negotiations with France. In these talks the use of British Naval and Air bases by France was discussed, as well as the question of the common Commander-in-Chief, who, in all probability, will be an Englishman. A final decision has, as far as is known, not yet been reached in this case either.

By Order
von Selzam

No. 53 (252)

The German Ambassador in London to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, 10 July 1939

The campaign of hate against Germany roused by the *coup* that Germany is alleged to be planning against Danzig has, after a few days, subsided by reason of its mendacity.

This should, in itself, indicate the close of this latest chapter in the efforts of our enemies to involve Germany in a world war, but the last few days have revealed a state of public feeling in Britain which deserves serious attention.

Public opinion here, which is always susceptible to emotional appeals, has reached a point at which people think and talk of nothing but "war". A number of factors have contributed to this, namely, the Government's anti-German encirclement policy, rearmament propaganda, the introduction of conscription, the Air Raids Precautions organization, and above all the flood of anti-German propaganda in press,

cinema, theatre and wireless. The only question on which some slight difference of opinion exists is whether war is inevitable or not. The average Englishman is guided by his feelings and thinks it is, but the more thoughtful minority answers "No", perceiving that the existing relations between Germany and England are such that with goodwill, it should be possible to settle all questions at issue, and that even a victorious war would not advantage anyone. These in themselves sensible circles are, however, influenced by their knowledge of the measures taken by Great Britain's armed forces:—The Fleet is to be in readiness by the end of July; military training and organization measures are to be completed by the same date. . . . . .

von Dirksen

Towards the middle of July, fears were for the first time entertained in Britain that the encirclement policy might be wrecked by the Soviet Union. It was characteristic that anxiety was felt in London lest Poland might thereby be induced to negotiate with Germany and thus frustrate the carefully laid plans for a preventive war.

No. 54 (319)

The German Ambassador in London to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, 15 July 1939

According to a report from a very reliable source, the fear evinced in leading political circles here of an arrangement between Germany and Russia has lately increased to a considerable degree. It is feared above all that the logical result of such a compromise would be an endeavour on the part of

Poland to approach Germany now, since she can no longer reckon on the support of Russia.

From the point of view of home politics it is feared here that a German-Russian arrangement and a mitigation of the German-Polish controversy would cause unpleasant reactions which would be exceedingly detrimental to the effects of the Government's election slogan. The voters would ask why the Government had for so many months encouraged a pro-war atmosphere and had tried to build up a political front against Germany in spite of the fact that there had ceased to be any inner justification for such a procedure, owing to the development of a calmer atmosphere in the relations of Germany towards Russia and Poland respectively.

Dirksen

Towards the end of July, Britain declared herself prepared to enter upon military negotiations in order to secure the conclusion of an alliance with Soviet Russia at all costs, even before political negotiations had come to a conclusion. This was a proceeding concerning which Mr. Chamberlain remarked in the House of Commons that it was unprecedented in character.

No. 55 (323)

The German Ambassador in Paris to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Paris, 28 July 1939

From sources usually well-informed I have heard the following in regard to the Moscow negotiations:—

I. If Britain and France not only are now ready to engage in military talks prior to the conclusion of a political treaty,

but also display particular zeal with regard to these talks, there are three definite reasons to account for this:

1. Britain and France want to avoid at any cost the postponement or breaking-off of the negotiations, because they believe that, as long as negotiations are being carried on, Germany will not undertake anything in Danzig. Political negotiations had reached a certain satisfactory stage after an agreement had been arrived at on all points apart from the definition of indirect aggression and the details regarding the rendering of assistance. So many military considerations are involved in the last point that it is impossible to proceed further without simultaneous military talks.

2. By sending two representative Military Missions to Moscow, it is hoped to create an atmosphere favourable to the conclusion of a political treaty as well.

3. By means of a possible understanding to be arrived at between the military representatives, the politicians further hope to exert pressure with the object of overcoming the final difficulties, although it is felt that in military discussions Russia will broach not only the problem of the Border States but also the awkward problem of the tolerating of military assistance by Poland and Roumania.

II. The conclusion of an Anglo-Japanese Agreement is said to have been utilized by the British in the course of the Moscow negotiations in the following manner:—

Great Britain paid dearly for the negotiations over Tientsin by a limited recognition of Japanese interests in China for the duration of the conflict. Britain was forced to do this because she wished to be unhampered in Europe until the Moscow negotiations had resulted in the conclusion of a treaty. Failing this, Great Britain would find herself in a difficult position in the Far East, and Russia would, in the

long run, be exposed to steadily growing pressure on the part of Japan.

III. The existence of the German-Russian Agreement of 1926 is said to have been discussed by the French and British in connection with the Moscow negotiations. The question has been investigated as to whether Russia could be requested to denounce the Agreement or to declare its irrelevance. Discussion of this question has, however, apparently been postponed in order to avoid making the negotiations still more difficult.

IV. The head of the French Military Mission which is already being formed is to be General Doumenc, Chief of the 2nd Region in Lille. He belongs to the Artillery and has the reputation of being an officer of outstanding capability. During the Great War he was the organizer of motorization, and before taking over the Front Command in Lille, where he was at first in charge of the Ist Division, he was Acting Chief-of-Staff under General Weygand.

Welczeck

The conclusion of the German-Russian Non-Aggression Pact dealt the British encirclement policy its death-blow. This anti-German policy, as conceived by Lord Halifax, had, therefore, proved a failure. Britain, however, having intentionally burnt her boats and rendered a peaceful settlement impossible, now let matters take their fateful course. Poland had, in the meantime, become a mere tool in the hands of British war policy, and Britain made no further attempt to use her influence in order to avert a tragedy at the eleventh hour.

THIRD CHAPTER

Poland as the Instrument of Britain's Will to War

A. The Polish campaign to exterminate the German minority and Danzig a result of the British guarantee

By her rejection of the latest German proposals for an amicable settlement, Poland openly resumed the rôle of a hereditary enemy of Germany, which she had adopted in 1919 and had never abandoned, even in 1934. Secure in the possession of the British guarantee, the Polish Government cast aside all pretence and began a campaign of extermination against the minority Germans, unprecedented in violence, the obvious aim of which was to deprive them of all their rights and finally to exterminate them. This was accompanied by an increasingly undisguised provocative policy directed not only against Danzig, the incorporation of which in the Polish State was gradually becoming part of the official political programme, but also against Germany herself. M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, had gradually capitulated to the British policy of encirclement and to Polish chauvinism as encouraged by Britain, completely abandoning the policy which he had advocated hitherto. Poland had exercised her option and finally decided to co-operate in the anti-German policy of encirclement and began to contribute to its success by her widerspread action against the German minority within her own frontiers.

Whilst German diplomatic and consular representatives in Poland were continually compelled to report to their Government fresh instances of violation of rights by the Polish authorities and excesses against the German minority, the

representatives of the German minority attempted once more to check the worst injustices by submitting a petition to the President of Poland.

No. 56 (369)

Petition by the representatives of the German Minority to the President of the Polish Republic

(Translation)

12 May 1939

In the name of the German minority in Poland we appeal to you, Mr. President, in whom is vested the united and indivisible supreme power of state, to secure for the German minority respect for, and enforcement of, those rights guaranteed to it by the Constitution and the Law. We feel incumbent upon us to take this step because the almost innumerable representations made to the Government by word of mouth and in writing, although backed by conclusive evidence, have proved unavailing, and because we are mindful of the words which you, Mr. President, addressed on 5 November 1937 to the undersigned on the occasion of the agreement reached between the Polish and the German Governments concerning the treatment of the respective minorities. You emphasized at the time that mutual respect for the customs, habits and traditions of these two minorities was the most important prerequisite for harmonious co-existence of Poles and Germans.

The position of the German minority has always been difficult. The tension resulting from world-political events has, for weeks past, found vent in undisguised and impassioned hatred and numerous acts of violence committed against the German minority and its individual members. We have received from the Government the verbal assurance that they

disapproved of anti-German excesses and that they had issued instructions for the prevention of agitations and outrages. The German minority has not been given effective protection, so that it is now threatened with extinction. The number of unemployed Germans is alarmingly high and unemployment is steadily increasing especially in the industrial districts. The competent authorities responsible for the application of the Labour Laws deny protection to Germans, who are practically precluded from obtaining employment.

Agrarian Reform affects German landowners to an incomparably greater degree than the Polish, whereas the allotment of land to Germans for settlement is an extremely rare occurrence. Even in case of direct inheritance, a German is not automatically entitled to possession of landed property.

The cultivation of spiritual, cultural, economic and personal relations, and intercourse with our mother-country are hindered. Adherence to the National-Socialist ideology is regarded as inimical to the interests of the Polish State. Anti-German elements frequently hinder, and in some cases even prevent Germans of the Roman Catholic faith from exercising their religious duties in their mother tongue and no protection is afforded them by the police. As regards Protestant churches, especially The United Protestant Church in Upper Silesia and The Protestant Augsburgian Church, the Germans, although constituting the overwhelming majority of Protestant congregations, have been deprived of their privileges.

In German public schools Polish teachers are employed to such an extent that these schools have lost their German character. There is no German institution providing a training for young teachers. German private schools have to contend with difficulties of all kinds. The closing of German private schools, especially in Volhynia, means for the German minority the loss of their most important educational institutions. The Silesian Sejm has issued special regulations

in addition to the existing State Laws, with the object of preventing the granting of permission for the establishment of new German private schools and of barring pupils from attendance at such schools. Linguistic examinations, for which there is no legal justification, are held in the voivodeship of Silesia. German parents who refuse to send their children to Polish schools are heavily fined or imprisoned. Despite many years of endeavour to obtain a ruling, the question of text-books in German private schools is still undecided. Teachers are frequently refused permission to give instruction. School supervision is exclusively in the hands of the Poles. The school supervisory authorities neither understand nor take into account the specific character of the German schools.

The organization of our German youth in an independent association for the pursuit of cultural and educational activities has so far failed, owing to opposition by the authorities concerned. German children are left entirely to their own devices at the very age at which they are most susceptible to educational influences.

A summary of all these points has been before the Government for years in the form of memoranda and petitions. They are informed in full detail on all matters concerning the German minority. Ever since the promulgation of the Constitution on 17 March 1921, the representatives of the German minority have endeavoured to prevail upon the Government and the legislative bodies to pass supplementary laws for the enforcement of Article 109*. The ideal conception expressed in Article 109 has remained purely declaratory. The present conditions are due to the absence of clear legal provisions applicable to the minority. The German minority is firmly convinced that the treatment meted out to it is contrary to the Constitution and, in many cases, to the intentions of the legislator.

In view of the responsibility which we owe to the Republic of Poland as well as to our minority we deem our-

selves entitled and obliged to bring these matters to your personal notice, Mr. President, and to appeal to you to secure for the German minority the rights to which they are entitled under the Constitution and to guarantee the impartial enforcement of the Law as laid down in the Statutes.

We are, &c. . . . .

In the name of the German Minority

Senator Erwin Hasbach — Dipl.-Ing. Rudolf Wiesner

* *Article 109 of the Polish Constitution reads as follows:*

Every citizen has the right to retain his nationality and to cultivate his mother-tongue and national characteristics.

Special State Laws guarantee to the minorities within the Polish State free and unrestricted development of their national characteristics by means of autonomous minority associations of a public character as granted to associations within the sphere of general self-administration.

As regards the activities of such associations, the State reserves the right to control or supplement their financial resources in case of necessity.

No. 57 (370)

The German Consul at Lodz to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lodz, 15 May 1939

Very grave excesses which may be designated as a German pogrom, occurred last Saturday, 13 May and on Sunday, 14 May, in the town of Tomaschow-Mazowiecki (of some 42,000 inhabitants, of which some 3,000 are German), as a result of which numerous Germans have suffered complete financial ruin. A German by the name of Schmiegel had his

skull split and a woman, whose name has so far not been ascertained, was killed in a field while attempting to escape. Schmiegel's son was thrown from a second storey window and sustained serious injuries.

The excesses began last Saturday, 13 May. A few days previously the "Association of Polish Vocational Societies", an organization closely connected with the Government Party, exhibited large posters announcing an "Anti-German Demonstration" to take place on Saturday, 13 May. This demonstration started with speeches made from the balcony of a building in which the offices of the above-mentioned association, of the Government Party OZON and of its youth organization, *Mloda Polska* (Young Poland) are housed. In speeches addressed to huge crowds Germany was attacked in a most reprehensible manner, and the assertion was made that Poles in Germany were subjected to gross maltreatment, that their hands and feet were mutilated, their schools and churches demolished, and so on. When the mob was sufficiently worked up, the leaders of the demonstration handed forms to various doubtful characters who, accompanied by the crowds, were to go and demand that works managers should immediately dismiss all Germans, and sign the forms containing a declaration to that effect. This they did. Under pressure from the mob the firms were compelled to comply, whereupon the German workers were driven out of the factories. Having accomplished this, the crowd commenced the systematic and complete demolition of all German shops and private dwellings. In a wild fury they destroyed nearly all German private property. The Germans who were hunted like beasts fled to the open country and did not return until day-break. Many were seriously injured having been stabbed or beaten with sticks.

Sunday was peaceful, until in the evening the excesses began anew, and the crowd destroyed all German private property which had been left intact on the previous day.

It must be particularly emphasized that the police joined in the demonstrators' procession and did nothing to protect the life and property of the Germans. Without exaggeration, it may be said that these excesses were tolerated, if not instigated, by the Government. Now, these acts of terror having already been committed, police squads with fixed bayonets patrol the streets of the town for the sake of appearances.

On Saturday evening the windows of Ruppert's bookshop in the Petrikauerstraße, Lodz, where German books and periodicals are for sale, were smashed, as were also the windows of the premises of the (entirely non-political) Vocational Association of German Employees. On Sunday, i. e., yesterday, excesses also occurred at the Stylowy Cinema, where the German film, *Land der Liebe*, was showing. Terrorists forced the public to quit the theatre, and belaboured the dispersing crowds in front of the theatre with laths studded with nails.

As there is at present no reason to suppose that these acts of terror will be stopped, the position of the Germans here is considered to be very serious. They are deciding in ever increasing numbers to leave the country and to sell their real estate, as they consider their livelihood in Poland endangered. They fear the Poles, who, when no longer restrained, are capable of any act of violence. The German population regards them as much worse than the worst terrorists of Russian days.

von Berchem

No. 58 (385)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, 19 June 1939

In the course of the last few weeks the position of the German minority has grown considerably worse, and anti-German agitation has developed to an extent never before experienced by me during my long term of office here.

On Tuesday the 13th inst., Senator Hasbach again called upon the Premier in order to make another attempt to bring about an improvement in the situation. Immediately afterwards, the heaviest blow so far was struck at the German minority, namely, the confiscation of the German House in Bromberg, the closing down and confiscation of the German House in Lodz, the *Evangelisches Vereinshaus* in Posen, and the German House in Tarnowitz. Investigations are still going on concerning the extensive action aimed at the suspension of the activity of all organizations in Volhynia.

Needless to say I shall discuss these extraordinarily grave measures taken by the authorities with the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. On the strength of recent experience, I doubt, however, that they will feel inclined to alter their attitude towards the German minority. In my previous conversation with Count Szembek, on which I reported on 15 June, I most emphatically drew his attention to the threatened acumination of the situation as a whole, and the tremendously grave position of the German minority. I also expressed my astonishment at the fact that despite the already prevailing anti-German feeling of the population, which again and again resulted in new incidents, the author-

ities themselves took a part in rigorous administrative measures directed against the German minority.

Count Szembek referred to the confiscation of the Polish House at Ratibor, whereupon I replied to him that he knew very well that that was only a reprisal for the confiscation of the German Houses in Karwin and Oderberg, and that we were prepared to rescind the confiscation at Ratibor the moment the Polish authorities on their part rescinded the confiscations in Karwin and Oderberg. I told him that we were sliding downhill, and that we viewed future developments with great anxiety. In answer to my question as to whether he did not consider it advisable to put a stop to the dangerous policy of the home authorities, Count Szembek merely replied by a resigned shrug of his shoulders. He referred with regret to the rapid deterioration in the situation, but showed no initiative whatever as regards bringing about an abatement of hostilities as suggested by me.

It is a regrettable symptom that even a man like Count Szembek, who hitherto has always shown his willingness to remove difficulties, obviously no longer sees any possibility of counteracting the dangerous development. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the fact that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs do not want to intervene, or whether they cannot assert themselves in opposition to the Nationalist tendencies of the military. In my previous reports I have again and again drawn attention to how difficult the position of M. Beck, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, has become during the past few months, and how the military circles have gained increasing influence on Polish foreign policy. I have not gained the impression that the situation has changed in any way.

von Moltke

No. 59 (400)

The German Consul at Lemberg to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lemberg, 15 July 1939

During the month of June the Polish authorities carried out severe measures against the German organizations in Volhynia. Economically the Germans were hit by the closing of numerous German co-operative societies. The measures taken by the Polish police against the German organizations, which are fought with the same means as the political and economic corporations of the Ukrainians, are especially brutal. Generally the Polish police proceeds in such a manner that the leaders of the local groups are ill-treated until they sign an obligation to dissolve the local group. The leader of the local group in Haraždže near Luck was subjected to particularly cruel ill-treatment. Similar cases have become known to me from the following German settlements in Volhynia: Wicentówka, Stanisławka, Stary Zapust, Podhajce, and Ochocin.

Seelos

No. 60 (407)

The German Consul at Lemberg to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lemberg, 9 August 1939

The vigorous German element which settled in Galicia 150 years ago and numbers about 55,000 souls, has during the last decades overcome many a crisis. The present crisis, however, goes deeper, as it is not only of an economic nature

but also threatens the foundations of the life and culture of the German minority. For about three months now every form of expression of their national life and culture has been rendered more and more difficult to the Germans or even impossible.

Several German schools, such as the Roman Catholic private parish schools of Angelówka and Pöchersdorf and the Protestant schools of Kaltwasser and Rosenberg, were closed in June 1939 already. More elementary schools are expected to meet with the same fate at the beginning of the next school year in September.

The German employees and workmen both in state-owned and private Polish works have been systematically dismissed during the last few months. Even the manager of a paper mill owned by a member of the German minority has been already officially reprimanded by the *starosta*, because too many Germans were employed. Thus even in works owned by members of the German minority the opportunities for finding work are limited. The second and third sons of farmers are gradually finding every prospect of work blocked.

In the villages with a mixed population, the Germans are under constant pressure, owing to the hostile attitude of the Poles. In the case of an aggravation of the German-Polish tension they will have to expect the worst, even incendiarism and danger to life. Some weeks ago nearly the whole village of Schönthal was wilfully destroyed by fire. At another place an attempt was made to set fire to the crops. Young Germans in Galicia see that the future no longer contains possibilities for them; they are ruthlessly oppressed by being subjected to chicanery, flogging, etc. Consequently, about two months ago an unrestrained exodus set in, which deprived some German settlements e. g. Josefsberg of almost their entire young male population.

Seelos

No. 61 (410)

Memo by an official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

Berlin, 16 August 1939

Vice-Consul Schüller of the German Consulate-General in Kattowitz just telephoned from Beuthen as follows:

The apprehensions of the Consulate-General with regard to impending arrests of members of the German minority have been confirmed. On Monday and Tuesday houses of minority Germans were searched extensively; in connection with this very many minority Germans—approximately several hundred—have been arrested, among them numerous leaders of German minority organizations who had not already taken to flight.

Schliep

No. 62 (412)

The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the German Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Kattowitz, 16 August 1939

Action announced by the Polish authorities in progress since 14 August. Numerous houses searched and people arrested, especially in the circles of the Young German Party *(Jungdeutsche Partei)*, the *Deutscher Volksbund,* and the trade unions; number of arrested approximately 200. German newspapers, trade unions, etc., closed down; frontier almost completely closed. Pursuit of fugitives still continues. Guards and armament along the frontier increased.

Nöldeke

No. 63 (415)

Memo by an official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 20 August 1939

During the last few months the German Foreign Office has continually received reports from the German Consulates in Poland about the cruel maltreatment to which members of the German minority are subjected by the Poles who have been more and more lashed to fury and have abandoned themselves to unbridled fanaticism. In the annex thirty-eight especially grave cases have been collected, in which the remarkable similarity is to be noticed with which the assaults on minority Germans are staged. This seems to justify the question to what degree these excesses are tolerated or fomented by the authorities. In spite of the assurances repeatedly given to the German Embassy in Warsaw by competent Polish authorities, according to which the Polish Government were exerting all their influence in order to prevent the persecutions of Germans, one cannot but get the impression that the excesses against the Germans are fomented as far as possible by official quarters in order thus to maintain the war spirit of the Polish nation. Bergmann

Annex

(Translation)

1. On 2 April, eight members of the German Sport Club at Klein Komorsk, in the district of Schwetz, were attacked on the farm belonging to the minority German Pankratz by Poles who fell upon the Germans with sticks and flails. One German, who had been knocked down, was pushed into the cesspool. Pankratz was so badly beaten up that the doctor said he would be unable to work for a period of six weeks. The next day Pankratz was arrested by the police.

2. On 17 April 1939, the minority German Fritz Pawlik, of Ciszowieco, was so badly beaten by a group of Poles, led by the Pole Malcharek, that he had to be taken by the police, in an unconscious condition, to his parents' house. Although he was still unconscious an the following day, the Polish authorities refused to admit him to a hospital.

3. On 19 April 1939, the minority Germans Peter Kordys and Richard Mateja, of Kattowitz, were attacked by about forty Insurgents. The two Germans were so beaten that Kordys fled covered with blood, and Mateja was left lying there, seriously injured. He was carried away by the police, and thrown into prison, without medical examination or treatment.

4. On 23 April 1939, Cofalka, an old man, who was an invalid, and hard of hearing, was delivering copies of the newspaper *Kattowitzer Zeitung* in Chorzow, when he was attacked by Insurgents and beaten till the blood flowed. As a result of this assault, Cofalka has become completely deaf in one ear.

5. On 27 April, Hermann and Emil Mathies, of Liebenwalde in the district of Schwetz, were attacked in their home and so brutally treated that the one had several teeth knocked out and his lower jaw smashed, while the other was knocked down and left unconscious.

6. On 28 April, Fritz Köppke, of Zbiczno in the district of Strasburg, a minority German, was attacked by members of the Polish Reservists Association, and so brutally manhandled that he had two ribs fractured. For weeks he had to stay in bed and was unfit for work.

7. On 30 April, an attack was made on several young minority Germans of Piaski in the district of Schwetz. Eckert, a minority German, was so badly injured that he was left lying unconscious. Oswald Frey, another minority German, of Schönreich had several teeth knocked out.

8. On 3 May, Franz Hybiorz, a minority German, of Bijasowice, was attacked by about twenty Poles in Reservist's uniforms and so brutally beaten with rubber truncheons that he remained lying unconscious in the street.

9. On 4 May, in the station of Bismarckhütte, Ehrenfried Heiber, a minority German, was attacked from behind and knocked unconscious with a blunt object. He received a wound approximately four inches long and half an inch wide. The police refused to take down the report of this assault.

10. On 5 May, Rauhut, a pupil of the German Secondary School in Bromberg, was attacked by several Poles who hit him on the head with a bottle with such force that the bottle was smashed and Rauhut collapsed with severe cuts in the head. When he recovered, he was again knocked down by the passers-by, who had applauded this brutal action.

11. On 9 May, two minority Germans, Richard Fandrey, of Neukirchen in the district of Schubin, and Damrau, a farmer, were attacked by about thirty Poles and so brutally beaten with sticks and stones that their faces were battered beyond recognition.

12. On 12 May, Valentin Jendrzejak, an Insurgent, forced his way into the home of Robert Robotta, of Kattowitz, a minority German, seized a chair and struck Robotta with it; Robotta received a blow on the left arm, which fractured his wrist. Then the Pole kicked the helpless man repeatedly in the abdomen and in the hips. Robotta's daughter wanted to ring up the police from Poloczek, the grocer's, but the shopkeeper did not allow her to do so as, according to him, the police were only there to protect the Poles.

13. On 14 and 15 May, hundreds of members of the German minority of Tomaschow, Konstantynow, and other places in the voivodeship of Lodz, were attacked, their homes plundered and destroyed. In this pogrom, one minority German was killed, ten others were so seriously injured that

there was little hope of their recovery, numerous other minority Germans were more slightly injured.

14. On 16 May 1939, Leo Krawczyk, an Insurgent, attacked Adelheid Cichy, a minority German, in Kattowitz. He kicked her in the groin with his boot and tried to throw her down the stairs of the house. Frau Cichy received numerous injuries in the head, thigh, groin, and hands.

15. On 18 May, Paul Enders, of Luck, a minority German, was arrested without cause. When he was being questioned about his membership in the Young German Party, he was repeatedly struck in the face and kicked in the stomach. On 20 May, he was taken to Rowno in chains, and there set free on 25 May.

16. On 24 May, Erhard Ossadnik, of Kattowitz, a minority German, was attacked by four Poles in uniforms because he had spoken German to a friend in the street. He received numerous injuries on the left side of his face, and four of his front teeth were knocked out.

17. On 27 May, Josef Mazur, of Kobior, a minority German, was attacked by a large group of Poles. He was knocked unconscious with rubber truncheons. In the medical examination, numerous effusions and cuts in the head, face, and ears were found, as well as numerous welts of a reddish blue colour and covered with clotted blood on the chest, back and buttocks.

18. On 29 May, Albert Kränk, a country labourer, of Kzywka, was attacked by two Poles, who had disguised their faces, while working in the fields. His penis and left testicle were so severely injured by stabs and blows that he had to be taken to the hospital of Lessen for treatment.

19. On 29 May 1939, Stühmer, of Neudorf in the district of Briesen, a minority German, was arrested and struck dead by the Poles when he was about to cross the frontier. His body, very badly mutilated, was identified by his relatives in the hospital of Graudenz.

20. On 1 June 1939, the minority German Johann Burdzik, of Giszowiec-Myslowice, a disabled miner, was attacked by an Insurgent. The latter first took him by the throat, then threw him into a ditch, and injured him severely with a stick. When the Insurgent tried to put out Burdzik's eyes, he was pulled off by passers-by, so that Burdzik got off with effusions in the eye, numerous bruises and injuries caused by blows in the face and the body, and two teeth knocked out.

21. On 2 June, Theodor Stehr, a minority German of Konstantynow, was attacked by a Pole. When he offered resistance, four more Poles hastened to the spot and beat him to such a degree that he collapsed and had to be taken to hospital with a fractured rib and other injuries.

22. On 5 June, Wilhelm Kübel, a minority German of Kostuchna, who carries round copies of the newspaper *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, was robbed of his bundle of newspapers. When he tried to regain possession of it, he was knocked down by other Poles and badly kicked when lying on the ground. The police did not interfere.

23. On 6 June, Georg Kindler, of Bykowina, and Bernhard Harmada, of Nowa Wies, both minority Germans, were attacked by Poles. Kindler was struck in the ribs with a bottle with such force that the bottle smashed. Harmada, a badly disabled war invalid with a stiff leg, was so severely beaten with beer bottles, rubber truncheons and a walking-stick that he had wounds and bruises all over his body.

24. In the night of 11 June 1939, the minority German Anton Podszwa, of Trzyniec, an innkeeper, was shot dead on his way home by persons unknown.

25. On 15 June, Alois Sornik, a German national, was hit on the head from behind by the Polish forest labourer Onufrak, of Zielona, and was so severely injured that he died a few days later.

26. On 17 June, the minority German, Fritz Reinke, of Tonowo in the district of Znin, was knocked down from behind by two Polish farm hands with battens taken from a wooden fence. The Poles continued beating Reinke when he was lying on the ground, so that he had numerous deep cuts and effusions in the head, face, shoulders, arms, and hands, and is incapacitated for work for the time being.

27. On 17 June, the minority German, Hans Zierott, of Oberausmaß in the district of Kulm, was attacked by three men who tried to force him to say:—"Hitler is a swine". When he refused he was threatened with a knife, and thus compelled to comply with their demand. Zierott is a cripple and unable to defend himself.

28. On 20 June 1939, the minority Germans, Völpel, Dilk, and Sawadski, all leading members of the Haraždže branch (district of Luck) of the Young German Party, were summoned to the chief of police. Völpel was so maltreated with blows that his lower lip was cut through; then a policeman kicked him in the abdomen several times and dragged him about by the hair till he signed his resignation from the Young German Party and, together with his friends, brought in a motion on the following day that the whole local branch should be voluntarily dissolved. A short time afterwards, the Polish Press reported that local branches of the Young German Party were being dissolved voluntarily on the grounds of their general outlook *(Weltanschauung)*.

29. On 22 June, the minority German Luzie Imiolcyk, of Chorzow, was attacked inside the entrance of her house by two neighbours, the Polish women Maciejkowiak and Wietrzniak, and badly beaten although she was carrying a child of fourteen months in her arms. In the end she was thrown to the ground and some of her hair was torn out. When she reported the incident to the police, she was arrested for having insulted the Polish woman Maciejkowiak.

30. When, on 2 July, the minority German Luise Sprenzel was cycling to Zytna in the district of Rybnik, she was attacked by two Insurgents and so severely struck on the forehead that she fell from her bicycle and lay on the road unconscious.

31. On 7 July 1939, the minority German Julius Saeftel, of Szopienice in the district of Myslowice, a badly disabled war invalid with only one arm, was struck with fists and injured in the face by five Poles after the funeral of a minority German, which had already been disturbed by Poles.

32. On 8 July 1939, the Pole Kaczmarek forced his way into the home of Margarete Plichta, a minority German of Tarnowskie, by breaking in the door with a hammer. Then he set upon the German woman with his hammer and knocked a weapon which she had grasped in self-defence, from her hand so that her hand was badly injured. Then he took her by the throat and threatened to kill her. He only left his victim when she cried for help.

33. On 23 July, three Polish soldiers forcibly entered the home of the minority German Ewald Banek, of Sypiory in the district of Schubin, and asked for food and drinks. After having received them free of charge, they insulted the members of the family present and set upon them. Banek was badly wounded in the left shoulder and right arm by stabs with a bayonet. At the same time Polish soldiers forced their way into the home of the minority German Arthur Pahlke and tried to rape Frau Pahlke. When Pahlke tried to protect his wife, he was very severely maltreated.

34. On 6 August, a gang of young Poles forced the gate of the farm belonging to the seventy year old minority German August Mundt, of Bialezynek. They injured Mundt in the eye and lower jaw, beat his son Wilhelm with sticks and stones till he fell to the ground unconscious, and also mal-

treated the country labourer Karl Jesser, who is in Mundt's employ.

35. On 9 August, policemen entered the Christian Hospice in Kattowitz where a meeting of the German People's League was just being held. The armed police set upon the eighteen minority Germans present with rubber truncheons and the butt-ends of their rifles and dragged them to the police station. During the night they were questioned as to what had happened at the meeting, and subjected to such severe maltreatment that when they were released in the morning, they were covered with red and blue bruises and welts. One minority German had his arm badly wrenched, another had become temporarily deaf in consequence of blows on the head.

36. On 14 August, the minority German Thomalla, of Karwin, was arrested, the reason being unfounded calumnies. During his two days' detention he received neither food nor water. At his examination he was severely beaten, and knocked unconscious with fists and bludgeons so that he was mentally deranged when he was released on 16 August.

37. In the middle of August, innumerable minority Germans were arrested on the pretext of having committed high treason. The minority German Rudolf Wilsch, of Laurahütte, District Leader of the Young German Party, was arrested and during his examination beaten till he collapsed completely. After this grave maltreatment he was forced by threats of quartering or of similar torture to plead guilty to the unjust accusation brought against him.

38. Jaeger, a German national, Grant, a minority German, Fräulein Kiesewetter, and Fräulein Neudam, as well as other German nationals and members of the German minority, were grossly maltreated in Polish prisons in order to extort confessions from them. Caustic liquids, for instance, were injected into their genitals, they had ribs broken and were

tortured by applications of electric current. After a long stay in hot rooms they were given salt water as a beverage. The minority German Schienemann, still resident in Sieradz, has had his health completely ruined, and during the inquisition lost nearly all his teeth.

No. 64 (416)

Memo by an official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 23 August 1939

According to a statement made by the Reich Ministry for Home Affairs, about 70,000 refugees belonging to the German minority in Poland have been given shelter in refugee clearing camps up to 21 August last. Of these, about 45,000 came from Polish Upper Silesia and the Olsa territory. Neither refugees who moved into the Danzig territory nor those who have been able to find shelter with relatives or friends in Germany without passing trough a refugee camp, are included in the above figures.

Bergmann

No. 65 (417)

The German Consul-General at Thorn to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, 28 August 1939

To-day I received the following report from a trustworthy source in Usdau: —

"A week ago a Polish demonstration having as its slogan 'Harvest Festival with drawn Swords' was to take place at Usdau; the attendance, however, was extremely disappointing as the German population refused to take part.

Last Sunday the Poles thought the time was ripe to take vengeance on the German population. Under the pretext of conforming with the measures for evacuation, the greater part of the German minority was driven together like cattle and, as there were no vehicles available for their transport, were marched off into the interior of the country. Those who could not keep up the quick pace of the march were driven forward by blows with the butt-ends of rifles.

A woman who was with child and could not march on was so badly beaten by the guards that she had a miscarriage as a result of which she died.

Another woman had to take with her her little daughter, who was only four years old. Several blows with the butt-end of a rifle which both mother and child received, gave the child a severe wound on the head rendering her absolutely unable to walk any further. The mother then attempted to carry the child, but by doing so was herself so much impeded that she could not keep up with the extremely quick pace of the march. The leader, therefore, uttering unrepeatable insults, simply snatched the child from her mother and slew it. To his accomplices he justified his action by saying: 'This brat would otherwise only give birth some day to more German swine.'"

These minority Germans have, in all probability, been driven into one of the numerous concentration camps.

von Küchler

No. 66 (444)

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, 1 August 1939

The population of Poland has borne the state of partial mobilization and political insecurity, which has now lasted for four months, without any appreciable diminuation of their hostile attitude. The old hatred for everything German and the conviction that it is the fate of Poland to cross swords with Germany, are too deeply ingrained for passions to subside quickly once they have been inflamed.

If one wants to discover the reason of this unanimous feeling among the Polish people, it is important to realize the special structure of the Polish population.

The greatest part of the Polish intelligentsia comes from classes which before and during the Great War fought the revolutionary struggle against the so-called Partition Powers. To-day this Polish intelligentsia administer the State, their posts as civil servants being their only source of subsistance. They consider themselves the mainstay of Polish nationalism and of the Polish State, and their nationalistic revolutionary tradition has filled them with a national fanaticism which is not easily shaken by hostile propaganda. The great land-owners and the upper middle class, though too unimportant in numbers to be reckoned as a special factor, are intimately connected with French culture and therefore do not fall far short of the rest of the intelligentsia in their dislike of Germany.

The great masses of the Polish peasant population are obtuse and ignorant, and the majority are illiterate and

easily managed by any government that appeals to them with clear national slogans. Priests and teachers are the instruments with the help of which the politically unformed mass of villagers are governed and influenced. Even the more advanced part of the peasant population is on the anti-German side.

The Polish workmen, who live in very poor social conditions, are mostly Marxians, which is in itself sufficient to make them hostile to National-Socialist Germany. Moreover, their political organization still retains old traditions from the struggle for national liberty, traditions which made it easier for them to join hands with middle class nationalists in their fight against Germany.

A lower middle class of a distinctively Polish character hardly exists in Poland. Its place is taken by a strong Jewish element without national feeling and therefore imbued in exaggerated measure with all the bad qualities of a lower middle class, i. e., an inclination to nervousness and to the spreading of rumours. This Jewish middle class in Poland is, as far as the struggle against Germany is concerned, a natural and fanatical ally of Polish chauvinism.

Special attention must be paid to the activities of the Polish clergy, whose influence is extremely great because of the strong religious feeling prevalent in all classes. As far as their personal influence on the population is concerned, they put themselves the more willingly and unreservedly at the disposal of the Polish anti-German propaganda as their own aims completely coincide with those of the State. They preach to the nation that Poland is on the verge of waging a holy war against German neo-paganism, and they can hardly be surpassed in their chauvinism. Thus some priests in rural districts are reported to have already held services of intercession for Polish victory and to have declared that they could not pray for peace because they were all for

the Cardinal was often altered by the priests into prayer for a Polish victory.

The special structure of the Polish population and the propaganda which has been skilfully adapted to it, have had the effect that in Poland, even among the masses, the determination to resist obviously continues unbroken. The slogans of the Government propaganda are taken as gospel truth: wide circles are indeed convinced of the fact that Poland is on the side of the future victors, that people have not enough to eat in Germany, that every day scores of deserters, hungry German soldiers and labour service men, are streaming into Poland, that the German war material is of very doubtful value, that Germany's foreign policy suffers one defeat after another. Polish propaganda has also succeeded in convincing large sections of Polish public opinion that a war about Danzig means a war for Polish independence. Even in those circles of the intelligentsia who have some experience of foreign countries and are therefore able to estimate correctly the proportionate strength of Germany and Poland, the spirit of resistance continues unimpaired. Even if in the course of a war Poland should be completely occupied by German troops, they are convinced that Poland will finally rise again greater and stronger than ever thanks to the victory of her allies. At the moment a certain disposition inherent in the Polish character to stake everything on one card misleads many people to think that Poland should begin war sooner rather than later in order to counteract the wearing effect of the prolonged crisis. It is true, this optimism is based on the presupposition that the confidence placed in the allies, especially in Britain, remains unshaken. If in this respect the failure of the Polish-British negotiations for a loan has undoubtedly created a certain nervousness, Polish propaganda on the other hand has done

its share to parry the blow. It is better therefore not to exaggerate these occurrences and their consequences.

As is shown in the views expressed above, the four months of political tension and partial mobilization of the Polish army have so far had no effect on Poland's moral and material powers of resistance. In consideration of the confidence that Poland places in her allies and that is carefully nourished especially by British propaganda, a fundamental change in Poland's attitude cannot be expected in the near future.

von Moltke

Just as the Polish campaign of extermination against the German minority was gradually approaching a climax, Polish acts of provocation against Danzig increased in number and seriousness. Poland having declared any alteration of the status of Danzig as constituting a casus belli, *and being supported by Britain in this matter, Danzig was prepared for the worst, in view of the fact that Britain had given Poland* carte blanche. *As early as May 1939, Polish aircraft and Polish soldiery were responsible for frontier incidents. The Polish garrison on the Westerplatte was strengthened in violation of existing treaties, and troops were concentrated on the Danzig frontier. At Kalthof, a citizen of Danzig was killed on 20 May by shots fired from a car belonging to the Polish Diplomatic Agency. This murder was then actually made the subject of an exchange of notes by Poland, in which she adopted a highly provocative tone. At the same time Poland systematically increased the number of Polish customs inspectors, a step which forced the Danzig Senate to make a protest. Poland replied by threats and by a further increase of the Polish customs personnel.*

In July, Poland began to exert further economic pressure on Danzig; in particular, the import of foodstuffs from Poland and the export of the products of the Danzig foodstuffs manufacturing industry to Poland was inhibited. The aim obviously

was to subject Danzig to an economic blockade. The representative of the Polish minority in the Danzig Diet openly declared at a demonstration at Gdynia on 29 June, "that the Polish population of Danzig would, with the aid of the Polish army, achieve the reunion of Danzig with the mother-country." Tension reached a climax as a result of a Polish ultimatum issued on the night of 4 August, the pretext given for which was a decree falsely alleged to have been issued by the Danzig Senate.

No. 67 (432)

The Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig to the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig

(Translation)

Danzig, 4 August 1939

To the President of

the Senate of the Free City of Danzig

Herr Arthur Greiser, Danzig

I learn that the local Danzig customs officials stationed on the frontier between the Free City of Danzig and East Prussia have declared in an unparalleled statement to the Polish customs officials, that the Danzig executives intend from 7 o'clock a. m. on 6 August onwards to oppose a certain number of Polish inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties, which functions are a part of the prerogatives of the Polish Government on the customs frontier. I am convinced that this act on the part of the local authorities depends either on a misunderstanding or on an erroneous interpretation of the instructions of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig.

I am fully convinced that you, Mr. President of the Senate, can have no doubt that this infringement of the funda-

mental rights of Poland will on no pretext whatever be tolerated by the Polish Government.

I await, by 5 August at 6 p. m. at the latest, your answer with the assurance that you have given instructions cancelling the action of your subordinates.

In view of the fact that the above-mentioned action is one of a series which have taken place on the frontier, I am forced to warn you, Mr. President of the Senate, that all Polish customs inspectors have received the order to appear for duty in uniform and bearing arms, on 6 August of the current year and on subsequent days, at every point on the frontier which they consider necessary for examination of the customs. Every attempt made to hinder them in the exercise of their duties, every attack or intervention on the part of the police will be regarded by the Polish Government as an act of violence against the officials of the Polish State in the pursuance of their duties.

If the above-mentioned illegal actions should take place, the Polish Government will take retaliatory measures (retortions) without delay against the Free City, as the responsibility for them will rest entirely on the Senate of the Free City.

I hope to receive a satisfactory explanation before the above-mentioned date.

Chodacki

No. 68 (433)

The Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig to the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig

(Translation)

Danzig, 4 August 1939

Mr. President of the Senate,

The Polish Government beg to express their astonishment at the fact that the Senate should find technical difficulties in

replying to so simple a matter. In the interest of avoiding threatening consequences, I note for the time being that no act of violence will be undertaken against our customs inspectors and that they will be able to proceed in a normal way with their duties. I must repeat nevertheless that the admonitions contained in my note of 4 August, 11.40 p. m. remain in force.

I have etc., Chodacki

No. 69 (434)

The President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig

(Translation)

Danzig, 7 August 1939

Sir,

In reply to your two notes dated the 4th of this month, the second of which I received on 5 August, I must express my astonishment to you that you should make a completely unverified rumour a pretext for sending the Danzig Government a short-term ultimatum from the Polish Government, and thus in this time of political unrest conjure up unfounded danger which may result in inconceivable disaster. The sudden decree of the Polish Government that all Polish customs officials on duty are to appear in uniform and bearing arms, is a breach of the arrangement agreed upon and can be understood only as an intentional provocation to bring about incidents and acts of violence of the most dangerous nature.

According to facts which I have since ascertained and concerning which I immediately telephoned to you on Saturday morning, the 5th inst., no order announcing that the Danzig executives from 6 August at 7 a. m. onwards are to oppose a certain number of Polish inspectors in the exercise of their

normal duties has been issued from an office, certainly not from any administrative quarter of the Customs Office of the Free City of Danzig.

I refer you further to my letter of 3 June of this year, in which I already carefully defined the relationship of the Danzig customs officials and the Polish customs inspectors on the frontier.

The Danzig Government protest with great energy against the threatened retortions of the Polish Government which they regard as an absolutely inadmissible threat and the consequences of which will devolve on the Polish Government alone.

I have etc., Greiser

No. 70 (436)

Memo by an official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 24 August 1939

Apart from the shelling of the Luft Hansa plane D-APUP off Hela which we reported yesterday two further reports regarding the shelling of aircraft have been received.—

1. At about 1.15 p. m. the aeroplane D-APUP, Savoia type, piloted by Böhner, when making the trip from Danzig to Berlin was shot at by anti-aircraft guns on Hela and also aboard a Polish cruiser lying at a distance of 25 miles off the coast. The aeroplane was approximately 10—12 miles off the Hela Peninsula flying at an altitude of 4,875 feet. Eight shell-bursts were observed at a considerable distance from the machine.

2. At 4 p. m. the aeroplane D-AMYO, of the Ju 86 type, piloted by Neumann, was fired at from the Hela Peninsula while on its course from Danzig to Berlin. Distance from the coast 5—6 nautical miles, altitude approximately 3,900 feet. The range was too short and too low.

Schultz-Sponholz

No. 71 (437)

The German Consul-General in Danzig to the German Foreign Office

Information transmitted by telephone at 12.40 a. m., 31 August 1939

(Translation)

At about 10.30 p. m. on 30 August 1939, the Poles fired a number of shots over Danzig territory on the Danzig frontier near Steinfliess, north of Zoppot.

It has not been possible so far to ascertain whether these shots injured any persons or caused any material damage.

More detailed information following this morning.

The Reich Government were compelled, in the interests of German-Polish relations, to express to the Polish Government their growing apprehension with regard to the development of the Polish attitude towards Danzig. The arrogant reply received from Warsaw shows how little inclination Poland, feeling herself secure on account of the British carte blanche, *had at that time to renounce her provocative policy.*

No. 72 (445)

Communication from the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office to the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, 9 August 1939

(Translation)

The Reich Government have received with great astonishment information of the Note of the Polish Government to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, in which a demand was made in the form of an ultimatum to revoke an alleged decree intended to hinder the Polish customs inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties (which decree, however, was based on unfounded rumours, and in reality had never been issued by the Senate of the Free City of Danzig). In case of a refusal, the Free City of Danzig was threatened with retaliatory measures.

The Reich Government see themselves obliged to point out to the Polish Government that the repetition of such a demand, in the form of an ultimatum, to the Free City of Danzig and the threat of retaliatory measures would lead to greater tension in the relationship between Germany and Poland, and that the responsibility of such consequences would devolve exclusively on the Polish Government, the German Government already now declining all responsibility for them.

The German Government further draw the attention of the Polish Government to the fact that the measures taken by the Polish Government to prevent the import of certain goods from the Free City of Danzig to Poland are likely to bring about serious economic loss to the population of Danzig.

Should the Polish Government insist on further lending their support to such measures, there would, in the opinion of the Reich Government, be no choice left to the Free City of Danzig, as matters lie, but to seek other export and consequently import possibilities.

No. 73 (446)

Communication from the Under-Secretary of State at the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw, 10 August 1939

(Translation)

With the greatest surprise the Government of the Republic of Poland have taken note of the declaration given in Berlin on 9 August 1939, by the Secretary of State at the German Foreign Office to the acting Polish Chargé d'Affaires on the relations existing between Poland and the Free City of Danzig. The Polish Government in fact cannot perceive any legal foundation justifying Germany to interfere in the above-mentioned relations.

Whatever discussions on the Danzig problem may have taken place between the Polish Government and the Government of the Reich, these had their foundation merely in the good will of the Government and did not arise out of any obligation whatsoever.

In reply to the aforesaid declaration of the Government of the Reich, the Polish Government are compelled to point out to the German Government that, as hitherto, they will in the future oppose by such means and measures as the Polish Government alone consider adequate, any attempt made by the authorities of the Free City of Danzig to jeopardize the rights and interests that Poland possesses in Danzig, on the basis of the agreements to which she is a part, and that the Polish Government will consider as an aggressive act any possible intervention of the Government of the Reich which may endanger these rights and interests.

A report from the High Command of the German Armed Forces to the German Foreign Office dated 3 November 1939,

i. e., after the conclusion of military operations in Danzig, reveals to what extent Polish bases in Danzig had, in defiance of treaties, been reinforced for military purposes:—

No. 74 (437, Appendix)

The High Command of the German Armed Forces to the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 3 November 1939

The following is the result of an investigation of the military condition of the Westerplatte and of the former Polish buildings in Danzig carried out after the conclusion of military operations in Danzig:—

1. The Polish garrison on the Westerplatte numbered roughly 240 men *.

As regards fortifications ** on the Westerplatte, there were, apart from an old German open gun emplacement dating from 1911, in which three or four machine-guns with at least 10,000 rounds of ammunition were found, 5 concrete bunkers for machine-guns which had obviously been prepared beforehand by the Poles and built according to a well-planned system of reciprocal flanking. Moreover, the new barracks had been built so as to allow of easy defence on all sides, and the basement as well as the cellars in the so-called non-commissioned officiers' quarters had been built of concrete and equipped for defence. Finally there were found among other things:— one 7.5 centimetre gun and two anti-tank guns as well as a number of pill-boxes, palisades, and gunners' pits, ready for immediate action.

2. The following were the Polish bases within the precincts of Danzig: —

1. Polish Post Office, Heveliusplatz,
2. Main Railway Station and Polish Railway Post Office,
3. Head Office of the Polish Railways,
4. Polish Diplomatic Agency, Neugarten,
5. Polish Customs Inspection Offices, Opitzstrasse,
6. Polish Boy Scouts' Home, Jahnstrasse,
7. Polish residential flats, Neufahrwasser, Hindoriusstrasse,
8. Polish Students' Residence, Langfuhr,
9. Polish Secondary School.

Among other things the following war material was found and secured when the buildings were occupied:—

1. In the Polish Post Office:— three light machine-guns, 44 filled and 13 empty frames for light machine-guns, 30 army pistols, 1 revolver, 1 bag of infantry and pistol ammunition, 150 egg hand-grenades, 2 infernal machines, small arms taken from 38 prisoners.
2. In the Main Railway Station:— 1 light machine-gun and small arms.
3. In the Railway Station Post Office:— 1 machine-gun, 18 pistols, 4 rifles with ammunition, 2 boxes of hand-grenades.
4. In the Head Office of the Polish Railways:— 45 pistols, 2,600 rounds of ammunition.
5. In the Polish Diplomatic Agency, Neugarten:— 1 light maschine-gun, 5 rifles, 4 pistols and ammunition.
6. In the Polish Customs Inspection Office, Opitzstrasse:— 15 rifles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition.
7. In the Polish Boy Scouts' Home:— 1 machine-gun with ammunition and 20 rubber truncheons.

In all other bases, stores were found consisting partly of rifles, pistols and ammunition.

The Chief of the High Command of the German Armed Forces.

By Order

Bürkner

* *According to the Resolution of 9 December 1925, the Council of the League of Nations granted Poland the right to keep a military guard of 2 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers and 66 men on the Westerplatte.*

** *By virtue of the Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations of 14 March 1924, referred to in § 2 of the Provisional Agreement of 4 August 1928 between Danzig and Poland regarding the Westerplatte, the latter was placed exclusively at the disposal of the Polish Government for the storage of war material. Apart from this, the sovereignty of Danzig over this territory remained unimpaired, a fact also recognized by the Polish Government (cf. the Advisory Opinion of the jurists, Sir Cecil Hurst and Signor Pilotti, submitted to the Council of the League of Nations on 8 December 1927 by the Rapporteur of the Council. League of Nations, Official Journal 1928, pp. 161—162).*

B) The last phase of the German-Polish crisis

Not only did Germany repeat her sincere desire for a lasting friendship with Britain and France at a time when these Powers had already adopted a definitely anti-German attitude, but, when Poland's attitude made it obvious that she felt herself called upon to bring about the war with Germany for which Britain had been working, Germany did not fail to call the attention of the two Western Powers to the danger and probable consequences of the guarantee given to Poland. The following Memoranda by Baron von Weizsäcker, State Secretary, deal with conversations which he had with the French and British Ambassadors on and after 15 August.

No. 75 (449)

Memo by the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 15 August 1939

To-day the French Ambassador called on me after his return from leave. The Ambassador calmly and firmly expressed approximately the following views on the present situation: France had taken up her position. Her relations to Poland and Britain were known. A conflict between Germany and Poland would automatically involve France. That was a fact and not the wish of France. On the contrary, there was nothing France desired more urgently than a German-Polish compromise, especially with regard to Danzig. He hoped that a settlement of this special question would also bring about a general German-Polish détente. This, in short, was the impression he had received during his last conversation with M. Daladier and M. Bonnet . His latest impression in Berlin, however, was that of a certain aggravation in the situation. He was especially disturbed by the fact that the latest German utterances repeatedly mentioned the question of honour; that obviously meant a serious aggravation of the situation.

I thereupon confirmed M. Coulondre's impression that the situation had changed since his going on leave in July. I then went back rather far and expounded the necessary arguments to characterize the unbridled suicidal policy of Poland. I spoke to M. Coulondre of Poland's Note to Danzig of the Saturday before last, which amounted to an ultimatum, of the aggressive tone in the exchange of opinions between Berlin and Warsaw last week, of the provocative utterances of the inspired Polish Press, of the continuous measures for suppressing, impeding, banishing Germans etc. adopted by Polish subordinate authorities (in this connection I showed M. Coulondre a list which had just arrived). I interpreted all this as being the practical

result of the promises given by France and Britain to Poland. This was the harvest sown by the Western Powers in Poland.

M. Coulondre then made a little excursion into the past and represented the British-French guarantee to Poland as the inevitable result of Germany's having established a protectorate in Czechia. Apart from this the Ambassador asserted that, according to French reports, there was no lack of restraint in Warsaw, but that on the contrary the Polish Government remained quite calm.

As instructed, I then spoke in a very grave and warning tone and disputed M. Coulondre's statements most emphatically. The Polish Government, I pointed out, did not really govern the country. Paris apparently did not know what "Polish mismanagement" meant. The Polish Government must be out of their wits, otherwise threats amounting to an ultimatum, as lately applied to Danzig, could not have been pronounced by Polish diplomats. Such excesses only proved Poland's implicit confidence in her two big brothers in the West, who would surely help her. We could and would no longer stand the continuation of such an attitude on the part of Poland. Poland was running amok and thus bringing her fate upon herself. Poland's folly, like every other folly, I continued, had certain merits:

1. Poland's friends could see what they themselves had brought about and

2. by such conduct Poland released her friends from their obligation to support her, for one could not imagine that either France or Britain would risk their very existence in favour of their friend who had gone mad. I therefore did not understand why, at the beginning of our conversation, M. Coulondre could have described French assistance for Poland as natural and automatic.

M. Coulondre then mentioned that the Franco-Polish Treaty of Alliance had been strengthened still more by the guarantee

given this year; France's legal obligation to Poland, however, was not the determining factor. For her security France needed balance of power in Europe. If this were disturbed in favour of Germany, i. e. if Poland were overrun by Germany now, it would be France's turn next; or else France's power would have to decline to the level of Belgium or the Netherlands. Practically France would then be Germany's vassal, and this is exactly what she did not wish to be.

I urgently requested the Ambassador to inform himself of Poland's real attitude and to rid himself of his completely erroneous idea regarding the behaviour of his ally. He would surely draw the correct conclusions.

When M. Coulondre asked me what these conclusions were I told him that Poland would have to comply with Germany's justified claims and that she would have to alter her general attitude towards Germany completely.

Finally the Ambassador said that his Government would not consent to bringing any pressure to bear on Warsaw as they had done on Prague last year. The situation had changed since then.

I replied drily to M. Coulondre that it was not for me to offer advice to him or to his Government. They should consider the facts and allow them to speak for themselves.

In the end the Ambassador assured me of his readiness to co-operate in any way towards the maintenance of peace. A European war would end in a defeat of all parties, even of the Russia of to-day. The victor would not be M. Stalin but M. Trotzki.

Weizsäcker

No. 76 (450)

Memo by the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 15 August 1939

After a long interval the British Ambassador to-day came to see me to discuss the situation. He asked me without much preamble about the result of Count Ciano's visit to Salzburg.

In my reply I did not refer to Count Ciano and my conversation with him, but I described the deterioration in the situation between Berlin and Warsaw and approximately followed the line of thought which I had taken up this morning, as instructed, in my conversation with the French Ambassador. I perhaps chose even stronger terms in regard to Polish policy when speaking to Sir Nevile Henderson than in my conversation with M. Coulondre.

When we were discussing the question of the customs inspectors, Sir Nevile Henderson made an assertion about German smuggling of arms and an extensive militarization of Danzig. He said that Polish rights and interests were affected by this without Poland having remonstrated. I most emphatically contested his view that the military measures taken in Danzig were unjustified. Danzig was only protecting itself against its protector. This I hoped was still permitted. I further explained how British policy had granted a jester's licence to the Polish Government, of which the Poles were now making full use. Britain would now have to realize where her policy of encirclement had led her, and would, I suppose, hardly be inclined or obliged to allow her Polish friends, who had completely lost their heads, to lead her to disaster.

The conversation with Sir Nevile Henderson this afternoon again revealed a fundamental difference of opinion regarding the Polish attitude. Sir Nevile Henderson, or I should say his Government asserted that Poland was reasonable and calm

and he disputed the fact that she was in a position to commit an act of aggression against Germany. In all other cases of a German-Polish conflict, however, the British Government were under an obligation to give her armed assistance and were firmly determined to do so. Poland, however, would not untertake any major step without previous consultation with Britain.

I then asked the Ambassador whether London could really have consented to the threatening Note to Danzig, or to the Polish declaration handed to us in the middle of last week, or to all the provocative speeches and articles and to the continuous suppression of the German minority. The limit of our patience had been reached. The policy of a country like Poland consisted of a thousand provocations. I asked whether Britain believed herself able to restrain Poland from every new and unconsidered action? As long as Warsaw felt itself protected by London, Britain's belief in her ability to manage the Poles was a mere theory. The reverse was the case.

After that I had to deny the assertion that instructions to adopt a more rigorous attitude had reached Danzig through our Consul-General there. I termed this statement, which had been made to the Ambassador, a direct lie.

The Ambassador then touched upon the question whether the problem of Danzig could not be postponed until it could be solved in a more peaceful atmosphere. He believed that we should then have better prospects of success. Sir Nevile Henderson thought that I should not be able to answer this question. I replied, however, that this question was purely theoretical, for a postponement could only be used by the Poles to aggravate the mischief which they had already caused; there was, therefore, no question of an improvement in the atmosphere.

The Ambassador then asked whether we could not take the initiative in arranging German-Polish negotiations. I there-

upon reminded him that, in his last speech in the Sejm, M. Beck had used the tones of a Pasha speaking from his divan when he declared that if Germany adapted herself to Polish principles he would be ready graciously to accept proposals framed accordingly. Besides, it was only last week that the Polish Government had declared that every German initiative at the expense of Polish demands was to be considered an act of aggression. I therefore saw no possibility for any German initiative.

The Ambassador then intimated that extensive German-British discussions on larger issues such as the colonies, raw materials, etc., might take place later on, but at the same time he said that the situation was much more difficult and critical than last year, for Mr. Chamberlain could not fly to Germany again.

As far as I was concerned I said I was unable to offer any advice except that Poland should see reason as soon as possible with regard to the acute problem of Danzig and her general attitude towards us.

Sir Nevile Henderson left me, conscious of the gravity and precariousness of the situation.

Weizsäcker

Neither Britain nor France was willing to bring Poland to reason as regards her attitude towards the Reich and Danzig. Not even after the warning implied by the historic announcement of the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union, was Britain prepared to bring her influence to bear upon Poland for the sake of peace. Mr. Chamberlain replied to this warning publicly and in a communication to the Fuehrer by repeating that Great Britain had no intention of withdrawing the carte blanche *which she had granted to Poland and openly threatening declaration of war by the British Government in the event of German-Polish conflict.*

No. 77 (454)

Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, to the Fuehrer, 22 August 1939

10 Downing Street, Whitehall, 22 August 1939

Your Excellency,

Your Excellency will have already heard of certain measures taken by His Majesty's Government, and announced in the press and on the wireless this evening.

These steps have, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, been rendered necessary by the military movements which have been reported from Germany, and by the fact that apparently the announcement of a German-Soviet Agreement is taken in some quarters in Berlin to indicate that intervention by Great Britain on behalf of Poland is no longer a contingency that need be reckoned with. No greater mistake could be made. Whatever may prove to be the nature of the German-Soviet Agreement, it cannot alter Great Britain's obligation to Poland which His Majesty's Government have stated in public repeatedly and plainly, and which they are determined to fulfil.

It has been alleged that, if His Majesty's Government had made their position more clear in 1914, the great catastrophe would have been avoided. Whether or not there is any force in that allegation, His Majesty's Government are resolved that on this occasion there shall be no such tragic misunderstanding.

If the case should arise, they are resolved, and prepared, to employ without delay all the forces at their command, and it is impossible to foresee the end of hostilities once engaged. It would be a dangerous illusion to think that, if war once starts, it will come to an early end, even if a

success on any one of the several fronts on which it will be engaged should have been secured.

Having thus made our position perfectly clear, I wish to repeat to you my conviction that war between our two peoples would be the greatest calamity that could occur. I am certain that it is desired neither by our people, nor by yours, and I cannot see that there is anything in the questions arising between Germany and Poland which could not and should not be resolved without the use of force, if only a situation of confidence could be restored to enable discussions to be carried on in an atmosphere different from that which prevails to-day.

We have been, and at all times will be, ready to assist in creating conditions in which such negotiations could take place, and in which it might be possible concurrently to discuss the wider problems affecting the future of international relations, including matters of interest to us and to you.

The difficulties in the way of any peaceful discussion in the present state of tension are, however, obvious, and the longer that tension is maintained, the harder will it be for reason to prevail.

These difficulties, however, might be mitigated, if not removed, provided that there could for an initial period be a truce on both sides—and indeed on all sides—to press polemics and to all incitement.

If such a truce could be arranged, then, at the end of that period, during which steps could be taken to examine and deal with complaints made by either side as to the treatment of minorities, it is reasonable to hope that suitable conditions might have been established for direct negotiations between Germany and Poland upon the issues between them (with the aid of a neutral intermediary, if both sides should think that that would be helpful).

But I am bound to say that there would be slender hope

understood beforehand that any settlement reached would, when concluded, be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready, if desired, to make such contribution as they could to the effective operation of such guarantees.

At this moment I confess I can see no other way to avoid a catastrophe that will involve Europe in war.

In view of the grave consequences to humanity, which may follow from the action of their rulers, I trust that Your Excellency will weigh with the utmost deliberation the considerations which I have put before you.

Neville Chamberlain

From this letter and the comments made on it by the British Ambassador during a conversation with the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden on 23 August, it became clear that Britain was not prepared to do anything beyond pronouncing a few noncommittal phrases in order to create the basis necessary in Warsaw for the resumption of direct negotiations between Germany and Poland. Nearly five months had been allowed to slip past, Poland had been encouraged in her overbearing attitude and now the task of bridging the gulf and thus enabling Poland to come to terms was foisted on Germany. In the course of this conversation, the Fuehrer left no room for doubt as to Britain's responsibility for the crisis in the Polish problem. He pointed out that Britain had always rejected Germany's friendly advances and would "rather have war than anything to Germany's advantage."

No. 78 (455)

Conversation of the Fuehrer with the British Ambassador, Berchtesgaden, 23 August 1939

Memo by Herr von Loesch, Interpreter

(Translation)

The British Ambassador began by saying that he was bringing a letter on behalf of the British Government. Originally a more prominent person was to have done so, but the course of events had called for prompt action, especially as the British Government had been much surprised by the news of the German-Soviet pact.

The Fuehrer stated that he had already seen a translation of the letter. He was in the act of composing a written reply, but in the meantime he would give the Ambassador a few verbal explanations to the same effect. Sir Nevile Henderson replied that he hoped a solution of the critical situation could be found; Britain had full appreciation for the fact that German-British co-operation was necessary for the welfare of Europe.

The Fuehrer replied that this should have been realized sooner. When the Ambassador raised the objection that the British Government had given guarantees and had to abide by them, the Fuehrer answered that he had made it clear in his reply that Germany was not responsible for the guarantees given by Britain, but that Britain was responsible for the consequences arising from these obligations. It was Britain's business to be clear on this point. He had informed the Polish Government that every further persecution of the Germans in Poland would result in immediate action on the part of the Reich. On the other hand, as he had heard, Mr. Chamberlain had provided for increased military preparations in Britain. German preparations had been limited to purely defensive measures. "Should I", said the Fuehrer, "hear of

further measures of this kind being put into effect on the part of Britain, to-day or to-morrow, I shall order immediate general mobilization in Germany!"

When the Ambassador remarked that war would then be unavoidable, the Fuehrer repeated his statement about mobilization.

He pointed out that people in Britain were always talking about the "poisoned atmosphere". The fact was that the "atmosphere" had been "poisoned" by Britain. Had it not been for Britain he would have come to a peaceful understanding with Czecho-Slovakia last year, and the same would have certainly been achieved this year with Poland in the Danzig question. Britain alone was responsible—of this the whole of Germany was firmly convinced. To-day in Poland hundreds of thousands of minority Germans were ill-treated, dragged away to concentration camps and driven from their homes. He had extensive documentary evidence on the subject, which, so far, he had refrained from publishing. Britain had given a blank cheque for all this, and now she would have to pay up. Now that Britain had given a guarantee, he, the Fuehrer, had seen himself compelled to take up a firm attitude on this question. He could not permit tens of thousands of fellow Germans to be slaughtered just because of a British whim.

He recalled the fact that formerly Germany had lived on good terms with Poland, and that he had made a decent and fair offer to Poland. This offer had been sabotaged by the Western Powers and, as in the case of Czecho-Slovakia, this had to a large extent been due to the reports of military attachés, who had spread false rumours of a German mobilization.

Here the Ambassador argued that the Polish Government had refused the German offer before Britain had given guarantees.

The Fuehrer continued by saying that Mr. Chamberlain could not have devised a better plan to make all Germans rally round him, the Fuehrer, than that of standing up for Poland and for a pro-Polish settlement of the Danzig question. He saw no possibilities in negotiations, because he was convinced that the British Government were not at all interested in a settlement. He could only repeat once more that a general mobilization would be proclaimed in Germany if further military measures were adopted by Britain. The same held good for France.

After the Fuehrer had emphasized the fact that all this would be laid down in writing, he stated that he had done all that a man could do. Britain had made an enemy of the man who had wanted to become her greatest friend. Now Britain would come to know a Germany other than the one she had been accustomed to for so many years.

The Ambassador replied that it was known in Britain that Germany was strong, a fact which she had often proved lately.

The Fuehrer stated that he had made a generous offer to Poland, but Britain had interfered.

The Fuehrer then described how, several months ago, he had in this very spot spoken about the same settlement with Colonel Beck, who then described the settlement as too sudden, but who, nevertheless, saw its possibilities. In March he had repeated his proposals. At that time, the Fuehrer emphasized, Poland would certainly have agreed if Britain had not interfered. The British Press had then stated that the liberty of both Poland and Roumania was being threatened.

The Fuehrer then explained that at the least attempt on the part of Poland to take further action against Germany or against Danzig, he would immediately intervene, and furthermore, that a mobilization in the West would be answered by a German mobilization.

The Ambassador: "Is this a threat?"—The Fuehrer: "No, a protective measure!"—

He then stated that the British Government had preferred anything to co-operation with Germany. On the contrary, their determination to destroy had led them to turn to France, to Turkey and to Moscow.

Against this the Ambassador protested, stating that Britain did not want to destroy Germany.

The Fuehrer replied that that was nevertheless his firm conviction, and so he had built the Siegfried Line at a cost of 9 milliard Reichsmark in order to protect Germany from an attack from the West.

Sir Nevile Henderson drew attention to the fact that the change in the British attitude dated from 15 March, to which the Fuehrer replied that Poland had become excited on her own account over the Carpatho-Ukraine. Moreover the internal state of affairs in Czecho-Slovakia had become unbearable for Germany. Bohemia and Moravia, after all, owed their culture and civilization to Germans and not to Englishmen. He was convinced that the best possible solution had been reached in Czechia. President Hacha had been happy to find a way out of the crisis; it did not, of course, matter to Britain whether or not there was shooting in the heart of Europe.

Finally the Fuehrer assured the Ambassador that he had no wish to reproach him and that he had always appreciated what the British Ambassador personally had done for German-British friendship.

The Ambassador spoke of the tragic development which would now ensue, whereupon the Fuehrer, basing his remarks on Britain's avowed intentions on this point, said that if war came it would be a life and death struggle: and Britain would have more to lose.

Sir Nevile Henderson remarked that according to Clause-

witz war always brought surprises; all he knew was that everybody would do his duty.

The Fuehrer said that Germany had never undertaken anything that could harm Britain; in spite of that Britain was taking sides against Germany. He once more referred to the question of Danzig and Poland, in which the British point of view was "rather to have war than anything to Germany's advantage".

Sir Nevile Henderson stated that he had done his best. Lately he had written to a Reich Minister that the Fuehrer, whom it had taken ten years to win Germany, would also have to give Britain more time.

The Fuehrer stated that the fact that Britain was against Germany in the Danzig question had profoundly shocked the German nation.

The Ambassador argued that it was merely the principle of force which they had opposed, in reply to which the Fuehrer asked whether Britain had ever found a solution for any of the idiocies of Versailles by way of negotiations.

The Ambassador had nothing to reply to this, and the Fuehrer stated that according to a German proverb it takes two to make a friendship.

Sir Nevile Henderson then stressed the fact that he personally had never believed in a pact between Britain, France and Russia. His opinion was that Russia by the delay only wanted to get rid of Mr. Chamberlain, in order ultimately to profit by a war. He personally would sooner see Germany conclude a treaty with Russia than that Britain should do so.

The Fuehrer answered: "Make no mistake. It will be a treaty lasting for many years."

The conversation ended with the Fuehrer's statement that the Ambassador would receive a written reply in the afternoon.

von Loesch

The German point of view is clearly summarized in the written reply sent by the Fuehrer to Mr. Chamberlain on 23 August 1939, in which he referred not only to the absence of any direct cause for dispute with Britain, the moderation and justice of the German demands to Poland, the repercussions of the British guarantee, the critical turn in the Danzig situation, the persecution of the German minority in Poland and the realization of Britain's determination to force a war, but also to Germany's determination to meet the threatening force of Britain with the force of the Reich and to reply to military measures on the part of Britain by German mobilization. The communication reads as follows: —

No. 79 (456)

The Fuehrer to Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, 23 August 1939

(Translation)

23 August 1939

Your Excellency,

The Ambassador to His Britannic Majesty has just handed me a letter in which Your Excellency, in the name of the British Government, has drawn attention to a number of points, which, in your opinion, are of extreme importance.

I beg to reply to your letter as follows:

1. Germany has never sought to enter into conflict with Great Britain nor at any time interfered where British interests were concerned. On the contrary, Germany has for many years, although unfortunately without success, attempted to gain the friendship of Great Britain. For this reason, Germany voluntarily undertook a restriction of her own interests throughout a large area in Europe which would

otherwise have been difficult to justify from a national point of view.

2. The German Reich, however, has, like every other state, certain interests which it is impossible for it to renounce and which lie within the category which Germany's past history and her economic necessities have rendered of vital importance. Certain of these problems were, and are, of the utmost importance to any German government both from a national and from a psychological point of view.

One of these problems is that of the German City of Danzig and the problem of the Polish Corridor connected therewith. Only a few years ago this fact was recognized by numerous statesmen, by authorities in historical research and literary men, even in Britain. I should like to add that the civilization of all those areas which come within the sphere of German interests aforementioned, and especially of those provinces which have returned to the Reich within the past 18 months, was developed not by Englishmen but exclusively by Germans, and, in part, over a thousand years ago.

3. Germany was prepared to settle the problem of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor by a very generous proposal, made once only, and by means of negotiations. The assertions disseminated by Great Britain with regard to the mobilization of German troops against Poland, the assertion concerning aggressive intentions with regard to Roumania, Hungary, etc., as also the more recent so-called guarantees given to Poland, effectually destroyed any inclinations on the part of Poland to negotiate on a basis which would at the same time be acceptable to Germany.

4. The general assurance given by Great Britain to Poland that Great Britain would support Poland in case of conflict in any circumstance, irrespective of the causes giving rise to such conflict, could only be regarded here as an incitement to let loose, under cover of what might be termed a blank cheque,

a wave of unspeakable terror against the 1½ million Germans domiciled in Poland. The atrocities which have taken place there since that time were terrible indeed for those on whom they were inflicted, but intolerable for the German Reich, which, as one of the Great Powers, was expected to watch them idly. In regard to the Free City of Danzig, Poland has, on countless occasions, infringed its rights, sent demands which were in the nature of an ultimatum and begun a process of economic strangulation.

5. The Reich Government informed the Polish Government a short time ago that they were not inclined to accept these developments in silence, that they would not tolerate the dispatch of further Notes couched in the form of an ultimatum to Danzig, that they would not tolerate a continuance of acts of violence inflicted on the German section of the population, nor would they tolerate the ruin of the Free City of Danzig by means of economic pressure, that is to say, the destruction of the very existence of the population of Danzig by a form of customs blockade, nor would they tolerate the continuance of such acts of provocation against the Reich. Regardless of the above, a solution must and will be found for the problem of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor.

6. Your Excellency informs me in the name of the British Government that in the event of any act of interference on the part of Germany, you will be compelled to support Poland. I have taken due note of your statement and can assure you that it can in no way shake the determination of the Reich Government to protect the interests of the Reich as set forth in § 5. I likewise agree with your assurance that the ensuing war would, in this case, be a long one. If Germany is attacked by Britain, she is prepared and determined to fight. I have often declared to the German people and to the whole world that there can be no doubt as to the determination of the New German Reich to accept privation and misfortune in

any form and at any time rather than sacrifice her national interests or even her honour.

7. The Reich Government have received information of the fact that the British Government intend to carry out mobilization measures, which in their nature are solely directed against Germany, as is stated in Your Excellency's note addressed to me. This is stated also to apply to France. As Germany never intended to adopt military measures other than those of a purely defensive nature against either Great Britain or France and, as has already been emphasized, never intended nor in the future intends to attack either Great Britain or France, the announcement which Your Excellency confirmed in your note can only constitute an intended threat against the Reich. I must, therefore, inform Your Excellency that in the event of such military measures being taken, I shall order the immediate mobilization of the German armed forces.

8. The question of a settlement of European problems in a peaceful spirit cannot be decided by Germany but chiefly by those who, since the crime of the Treaty of Versailles was committed, have steadily and obstinately opposed any peaceful revision of its terms. Only a change of attitude on the part of the Powers responsible for the Treaty can bring about a change for the better in the existing relations between Britain and Germany. During my whole life-time I have struggled to achieve a friendship between Britain and Germany, but the attitude adopted by British diplomacy, up to the present at least, has served to convince me of the hopelessness of such an attempt. If the future were to bring a change in this respect, none would welcome it more than I.

Adolf Hitler

Although the British Prime Minister's communication of 22 August and the speeches made on the following day by British statesmen betrayed a complete lack of comprehension

of the German point of view, the Fuehrer made a fresh attempt to come to an understanding with Great Britain at 1.30 p. m. on 25 August. He desired, as he told the British Ambassador, "to take a step in regard to Britain which was to be as decisive as the step taken in regard to Russia, the result of which had been the recent pact." After refuting the assertion that Germany wanted to conquer the world, he propounded the Polish problem in all its danger and urgency. Germany was, he said, resolved to put an end to the Macedonian conditions on her eastern frontier. Germany would not have to carry on a war on two fronts, the agreement with Russia was unconditional and represented a turning-point in the foreign policy of the Reich for the longest conceivable time. He was ready, after the German-Polish problem had been settled, to approach Britain again with a comprehensive offer. He approved of the British Empire and was prepared to stake the might of the German Reich for its existence, provided that his colonial demands, which were limited and could be settled by peaceful negotiations, were fulfilled and his obligations to Italy and Soviet-Russia remained untouched. He was also ready to accept a reasonable limitation of armaments. In the West he did not, he said, for one moment consider any frontier correction. Immediately after the settlement of the German-Polish question he would approach the British Government with an offer. This was an offer of European and indeed of world-wide significance. Its rejection by Britain appears all the more irresponsible in the light of the subsequent outbreak of war and the burden it has laid upon neutral countries throughout the world.

No. 80 (457)

Statement made by the Fuehrer to the British Ambassador, 25 August 1939, at 1.30 p. m.

(Translation)

The Fuehrer declared at the outset that the British Ambrassador at the close of their last conversation had expressed the hope that it would still prove possible to arrive at an understanding between Germany and Britain. He, the Fuehrer, had thereupon considered the situation once more and intended to-day to take a step in regard to Britain which was to be as decisive as the step taken in regard to Russia, the result of which had been the recent pact.

Yesterday's meeting of the House of Commons and the speeches made by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax were further reasons why the Fuehrer had again invited the British Ambassador to meet him.

The assertion that Germany wanted to conquer the world was ridiculous. The British Empire covered a territory of 40 million square kilometres, Russia of 19 million square kilometres, America of 9½ million square kilometres and Germany of less than 600,000 square kilometres. It was thus quite clear who wanted to conquer the world.

The Fuehrer informed the British Ambassador of the following:

1. The acts of provocation committed by Poland had become intolerable, irrespective of who might be responsible for them. If the Polish Government contested their responsibility, this merely proved that they themselves had no longer any influence on their military subordinates. In the preceding night 21 new frontier incidents had occurred. On the German side the utmost discipline had been displayed. All the incidents were due to Polish provocation. Besides this,

civil aeroplanes had been fired on. If the Polish Government declared themselves not responsible, this merely proved that they were unable to keep control over their own people.

2. Germany was resolved under all circumstances to put an end to these Macedonian conditions on her eastern frontier, not only in the interests of law and order but also for the sake of European peace.

3. The problem of Danzig and the Corridor would have to be solved. The British Prime Minister had made a speech which had done nothing towards bringing about a change in the German attitude. This speech might, if anything, give rise to a desperate and incalculable war between Germany and Britain, a war which would cause far greater bloodshed than that of 1914. In contrast to the last world war, Germany would not have to carry on a war on two fronts. The agreement concluded with Russia was unconditional and represented a turning point in the foreign policy of the Reich for the longest conceivable time. In no circumstance would Russia and Germany again take up arms against one another. Apart from this fact the agreements made with Russia would safeguard Germany, in economic respects also, for a war of the longest duration.

The Fuehrer had always been strongly in favour of German-British understanding. A war between Britain and Germany could in the most favourable circumstances bring Germany an advantage, but certainly not the slightest gain to Britain.

The Fuehrer declared that the German-Polish problem had to and would be settled. He was, however, ready and resolved to approach Britain again, after this settlement, with a generous and comprehensive offer. He himself was a man of great decisions and he would in this case also be capable of a great action. He approved of the British Empire and was prepared

to give a personal undertaking for its existence and to stake the might of the German Reich to that end, provided that

1. his colonial demands, which were limited and could be settled by peaceful negotiations, were fulfilled, for which he was prepared to concede a most protracted time-limit;
2. that his obligations to Italy remained untouched: in other words, the Fuehrer did not expect Britain to give up her French obligations and could for his part not abandon his Italian obligations;
3. he wished also to emphasize Germany's unalterable resolution never again to enter into a conflict with Russia.

The Fuehrer would then be prepared to enter into agreements with Great Britain which, as he had already emphasized, would not only, on the German side, in any case safeguard the existence of the British Empire, but if necessary would guarantee German assistance for the British Empire, irrespective of where such assistance might be required. The Fuehrer would then also be ready to accept a reasonable limitation of armaments, in accordance with the new political situation and economic requirements. Finally the Fuehrer renewed his assurance that he was not interested in western problems and that he did not for one moment consider any frontier correction in the west. The western line of fortifications, which had cost milliards, was the final frontier of the Reich in the west.

If the British Government would consider these suggestions, they might end in a blessing not only for Germany but also for the British Empire. If the British Government rejected the suggestions, war would be inevitable. In no circumstances, however, would such a war add to the strength of Great Britain. That this was true, the last war had amply proved.

The Fuehrer repeated that he was a man of great decisions to which he felt himself bound, and that this was his final proposal. Immediately after the settlement of the German-Polish question he would approach the British Government with an offer.

On this very day, namely 25 August, the British-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance, by which the fate of Britain was finally and irrevocably linked with that of Poland, was signed in London by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Polish Ambassador.

As is revealed by the text, this agreement far exceeded the obligations and claims usually covered by a mutual assistance pact and provided for cases such as a preventive war etc. This treaty is without precedent in the diplomatic history of Britain.

No. 81 (459)

British-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance, 25 August 1939

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Polish Government:

Desiring to place on a permanent basis the collaboration between their respective countries resulting from the assurances of mutual assistance of a defensive character which they have already exchanged;

Have resolved to conclude an Agreement for that purpose and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, K. G., G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

The Polish Government:

His Excellency Count Edward Raczyński, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Polish Republic in London;

Who, having exchanged their Full Powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions: —

Article 1

Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party will at once give the Contracting Party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power*.

* *In answer to a question asked by Mr. Harvey, M. P., whether the obligations of mutual assistance contained in the British-Polish Agreement dated 25 August 1939 were to cover the case of aggression made by non-German Powers, including Russia, Mr. Butler, British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, made on 19 October 1939 the following written reply: "No, Sir. During the negotiations which led up to the signature of the agreement, it was understood between the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government that the agreement should only cover the case of aggression by Germany; and the Government confirm that this is so."*

Article 2

(1) The provisions of Article 1 will also apply in the event of any action by a European Power which clearly threatened, directly or indirectly, the independence of one of the Contracting Parties, and was of such a nature that the Party in question considered it vital to resist it with its armed forces.

(2) Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of action by that Power which threatened the independence or neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a clear menace to the security of that Contracting

Party, the provisions of Article 1 will apply, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the other European State concerned.

Article 3

Should a European Power attempt to undermine the independence of one of the Contracting Parties by processes of economic penetration or in any other way, the Contracting Parties will support each other in resistance to such attempts. Should the European Power concerned thereupon embark on hostilities against one of the Contracting Parties, the provisions of Article 1 will apply.

Article 4

The methods of applying the undertakings of mutual assistance provided for by the present Agreement are established between the competent naval, military and air authorities of the Contracting Parties.

Article 5

Without prejudice to the foregoing undertakings of the Contracting Parties to give each other mutual support and assistance immediately on the outbreak of hostilities; they will exchange complete and speedy information concerning any development which might threaten their independence and, in particular, concerning any development which threatened to call the said undertakings into operation.

Article 6

(1) The Contracting Parties will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings of assistance against aggression which they have already given or may in future give to other States.

(2) Should either of the Contracting Parties intend to give such an undertaking after the coming into force of the present

Agreement, the other Contracting Party shall, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Agreement, be informed thereof.

(3) Any new undertaking which the Contracting Parties may enter into in future shall neither limit their obligations under the present Agreement nor indirectly create new obligations between the Contracting Party not participating in these undertakings and the third State concerned.

Article 7

Should the Contracting Parties be engaged in hostilities in consequence of the application of the present Agreement, they will not conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

Article 8

(1) The present Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five years.

(2) Unless denounced six months before the expiry of this period it shall continue in force, each Contracting Party having thereafter the right to denounce it at any time by giving six months' notice to that effect.

(3) The present Agreement shall come into force on signature.

In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in English in duplicate, at London, the 25th August, 1939. A Polish text shall subsequently be agreed upon between the Contracting Parties and both texts will then be authentic.

(L. S.) Edward Raczyński (L. S.) Halifax

Whilst the British Government were still considering the Fuehrer's communication of 25 August, an exchange of letters

took place between M. Daladier, the French Premier, and the Fuehrer. In his reply, the Fuehrer once again explained in detail the German point of view on the German-Polish question and reiterated his firm resolve to recognize the existing German-French frontier as final.

No. 82 (460)

M. Daladier, the French Premier, to the Fuehrer, 26 August 1939

(Translation)

Paris, 26 August 1939

Your Excellency,

The French Ambassador in Berlin has brought your personal message to my knowledge.

At an hour when you speak of the gravest responsibility which two Heads of Government can be asked to take, namely, that of shedding the blood of two great peoples desiring only peace and work, I owe it to you personally and to our respective nations to state that the fate of peace still rests in your hands.

You cannot doubt my feelings towards Germany, or the friendly feelings of France for your nation. No Frenchman has done more than I have to ensure not only peace between our two peoples, but also sincere co-operation in your own interests as well as in those of Europe and of the world.

Unless you are prepared to credit the French nation with a lower ideal of honour than the one with which I credit the German people, you cannot doubt that France will faithfully fulfil her obligation towards other powers which, like Poland, are, I am convinced, desirous of living at peace with Germany.

Both convictions are fully compatible with one another.

To this day there is nothing which might prevent a peaceful solution of the international crisis in a spirit of honour and dignity for all nations as long as the same will for peace prevails on all sides.

Together with the good will of France I proclaim that of all her allies. I personally guarantee the readiness always shown by Poland to have mutual recourse to methods of free conciliation such as can be envisaged between the Governments of two sovereign nations. With a perfectly clear conscience I can give you an assurance that among the differences which have arisen between Germany and Poland with regard to the Danzig question, there is not a single one which could not be submitted to such a procedure with a view to finding a just and peaceful solution.

Upon my honour I can also state that in the clear and sincere solidarity of France with Poland and her allies there is nothing that might in any way impair the peaceful disposition of my country. This solidarity has never prevented us from supporting this peaceful disposition in Poland, and it does not do so to-day.

At so critical a moment I sincerely believe that no noble-minded person could understand how a war of destruction could be waged without a final attempt at a peaceful settlement between Germany and Poland having been undertaken. Your desire for peace could exercise its influence with full determination towards this end without detracting anything from Germany's honour. As Head of the French Government, desirous of attaining full harmony between the French and the German nation, yet bound on the other hand to Poland by ties of friendship and my pledged word, I am prepared to make every effort that an honourable man can make to bring this endeavour to a successful end.

Like myself you were a soldier in the last war. You know as well as I do the feelings of disgust and universal con-

demnation which the destruction caused by war left in the conscience of all nations, irrespective of its issue. The idea which I cherish of your great part as leader of the German nation on the road to peace towards the fulfilment of its tasks in the common effort towards civilization, prompts me to ask you for an answer to this my proposal.

Should French and German blood once more have to flow, just as it did twenty-five years ago, in an even longer and more murderous war, each nation will fight fully confident of its ultimate victory. Yet we can be sure that ruin and barbarity will be the most certain victors.

Daladier

No. 83 (461)

The Fuehrer to M. Daladier, the French Premier, 27 August 1939

(Translation)

Berlin, 27 August 1939

Your Excellency,

I appreciate the concern you have expressed. I have always been equally conscious of the grave responsibility placed upon those who must decide the fate of nations. As an ex-soldier, I know as well as you do the horrors of war. This spirit and knowledge have guided me in a sincere endeavour to remove all causes of conflict between our two nations. I once told the French people quite frankly that the return of the Saar territory would be the basis for the achievement of this aim. Once that territory was returned, I immediately solemnly renounced any further claims which might affect France. The German people approved of my attitude. As you were able to see for yourself when you were in Germany last, the German people, conscious of the way they themselves behaved,

did not and still do not entertain any animosity or still less hatred against their former brave opponents. On the contrary; once peace was definitely established along our Western frontier, there came an increasing sympathy, at any rate on the part of the German nation,—a sympathy markedly demonstrated on many occasions. The construction of the great Western fortifications which have cost and will still cost many milliard Marks, is documentary evidence that Germany has accepted and fixed the final frontier of the Reich. In doing so, the German people renounced two provinces which once belonged to the old German Reich, were later on regained at the price of many lives, and were finally defended at the price of still more lives. Your Excellency will admit that this renunciation was not merely a gesture for tactical reasons but a decision confirmed by all our subsequent measures. You cannot, Excellency, cite a single instance in which this final settlement of the German frontier in the West has ever been disputed by one line or word. I believed that by this renunciation and by this attitude every possible cause of conflict between our two nations, which might have led to a repetition of the tragic years of 1914 to 1918, had been eliminated. This voluntary limitation of German claims in the West cannot however be regarded as an acceptance of the Dictate of Versailles in all other fields. Year by year I have tried earnestly to achieve the revision of at least the most impossible and most unbearable of all the conditions of this Dictate through negotiation. This proved impossible. Many enlightened men of all nations believed and were convinced that revision was bound to come. Whatever objection may be raised against my methods, whatever fault may be found with them, it cannot be overlooked or denied that I succeeded without any more bloodshed in finding solutions which were in many cases satisfactory not only for Germany. By the manner in which these solutions were accomplished, statesmen of other nations were relieved of their obligation, which they often found

impossible to fulfil, of having to accept responsibility for this revision before their own people. One thing I feel sure Your Excellency will admit, namely, that the revision was bound to come. The Dictate of Versailles was unbearable. No Frenchman with a sense of honour and certainly not you, M. Daladier, would have acted differently in a similar position than I did. I therefore tried to remove this most insane stipulation of the Dictate of Versailles. I made an offer to the Polish Government which actually shocked the German people. No one but I could have dared to forward with such a proposal. Therefore I could only make it once. I am firmly convinced that if Poland at that time had been advised to take a sensible course instead of being incited by a wild campaign of the British Press against Germany, accompanied by rumours of German mobilization, then Europe would to-day be able to enjoy a state of profound peace for the next 25 years. Actually, it was the lie about German aggression that excited public opinion in Poland; the Polish Government were handicapped in making necessary and clear decisions and, above all, their judgement on the extent of Poland's possibilities was clouded by the subsequent promise of a guarantee. The Polish Government rejected the proposals. Firmly convinced that Britain and France would now fight for Poland, Polish public opinion began to raise demands which might best be described as sheer lunacy were they not so extraordinarily dangerous. At that time unbearable terrorism set in; physical and economic oppression of the more than one and a half millions of Germans living in the territories severed from the Reich. I do not intend to speak of the atrocities which have occurred. Even in Danzig the outrages committed by the Polish authorities fully created the impression that the city was apparently hopelessly delivered up to the arbitrary action of a power that is foreign to the national character of the city and its population.

May I ask you, M. Daladier, how you as a Frenchman

would act if, by the unfortunate ending of a bravely-fought war, one of your provinces were separated by a corridor in the possession of an alien power, and a large city—let us say Marseilles—were prevented from bearing allegiance to France, while Frenchmen in this territory were being persecuted, beaten, maltreated and even murdered in a bestial manner. You are a Frenchman, M. Daladier, and I therefore know how you would act. I am a German, M. Daladier, and you will not doubt my sense of honour and my sense of duty which make me act in exactly the same way. If you had to face a calamity such as confronts us, would you, M. Daladier, understand how Germany, for no reason at all, could use her influence to ensure that such a corridor through France should remain? That the stolen territories should not be returned, and that Marseilles should be forbidden to join France? I certainly cannot imagine Germany fighting you for such a cause. I, for Germany, renounced our claim to Alsace-Lorraine in order to avoid further bloodshed. Still less would we shed blood in order to maintain such an injustice as I have pictured, which would be as intolerable for you as it would be meaningless for us. My feelings on everything expressed in your letter, M. Daladier, are the same as yours. Perhaps we, as ex-soldiers, should readily understand each other on many points. Yet I would ask you to appreciate also this, namely, that no nation with a sense of honour can ever give up almost two million people and see them maltreated on its own frontiers. I therefore formulated a clear demand: Danzig and the Corridor must return to Germany. The Macedonian conditions prevailing along our eastern frontier must cease. I see no possibility of persuading Poland, who deems herself safe from attack by virtue of guarantees given to her, to agree to a peaceful solution. Unless we are determined under the circumstances to solve the question one way or the other. I would despair of an honourable future for my country. If fate decrees that our two peoples should fight one another once

more over this question, it would be from different motives. I for my part, M. Daladier, would fight with my people for the reparation of an injustice, while the others would fight for its retention. This is all the more tragic in view of the fact that many great men of your nation have long since recognized the folly of the solution found in 1919 and the impossibility of keeping it up for ever. I am fully conscious of the grave consequences which such a conflict would involve. But I think that Poland would suffer most, for whatever the issue of such a war, the Polish State of to-day would in any case be lost.

That our two peoples should now engage in another murderous war of destruction causes me as much pain at it does you, M. Daladier. Unfortunately, as stated earlier in my letter, I see no possibility open to us of influencing Poland to take a saner attitude and thus to remedy a situation which is unbearable for both the German people and the German Reich.

Adolf Hitler

The British attitude to the Fuehrer's proposals made on 25 August is contained in the Memorandum which was not handed to the Fuehrer by the British Ambassador until 10.30 p.m. on 28 August, after three precious days had been lost. In it the British Government refused to make any distinction between future German-British relations and the pacification of Europe on the one hand, and Polish intransigence on the other. They showed themselves fully aware, however, of the danger implied by the present situation on Germany's eastern frontier and agreed with Germany on the urgent necessity of reaching a speedy settlement. They therefore proposed that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments and added that they had received definite assurances from the Polish Government that they were prepared to enter into discussions with the German Government con-

cerning the German-Polish problems and that any settlement arrived at must be guaranteed by other Powers. We now know that in this statement the British Government did not scruple to mislead the Reich Government intentionally. The correspondence which passed between the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the British Ambassador in Warsaw, and which has since been published, proves that the assertion made in the British Memorandum of 28 August to the effect that the British Government had received a definite assurance of Poland's readiness to enter into direct discussions did not correspond with the actual facts.

No. 84 (463)

Memorandum from the British Government, handed to the Fuehrer by the British Ambassador, 28 August 1939, 10.30 p.m.

His Majesty's Government have received the message conveyed to them from the German Chancellor by H. M. Ambassador in Berlin and have considered it with the care which it demands.

1. They note the Chancellor's expression of his desire to make friendship the basis of the relations between Germany and the British Empire and they fully share this desire. They believe with him that if a complete and lasting understanding between the two countries could be etablished it would bring untold blessings to both peoples.

2. The Chancellor's message deals with two groups of questions: — those which are the matters now in dispute between Germany and Poland, and those affecting the ultimate relations of Germany and Great Britain. In connection with these last, His Majesty's Government observe that the German Chancellor has indicated certain proposals which,

subject to one condition, he would be prepared to make to the British Government for a general understanding. These proposals are of course stated in very general form and would require closer definition, but His Majesty's Government are fully prepared to take them, with some additions, as subjects for discussion and they would be ready, if the differences between Germany and Poland are peacefully composed, to proceed so soon as practicable to such discussion with a sincere desire to reach agreement.

3. The condition which the German Chancellor lays down is that there must first be a settlement of the differences between German and Poland. As to that, His Majesty's Government entirely agree. Everything, however, turns upon the nature of the settlement and the method by which it is to be reached. On these points, the importance of which cannot be absent from the Chancellor's mind, his message is silent, and His Majesty's Government feel compelled to point out that an understanding upon both of these is essential to achieving further progress. The German Government will be aware that His Majesty's Government have obligations to Poland by which they are bound and which they intend to honour. They could not, for any advantage offered to Great Britain, acquiesce in a settlement which put in jeopardy the independence of a State to whom they have given their guarantee.

4. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government a reasonable solution of the differences between Germany and Poland could and should be effected by agreement between the two countries on lines which would include the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests, and they recall that in his speech of the 28th April last the German Chancellor recognised the importance of these interests to Poland.

But, as was stated by the Prime Minister in his letter to the German Chancellor of the 22nd August. His Majesty's Government consider it essential for the success of the dis-

cussions which would precede the agreement that it should be understood beforehand that any settlement arrived at would be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready if desired to make their contribution to the effective operation of such a guarantee.

In the view of His Majesty's Government it follows that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments on a basis which would include the principles stated above, namely the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests and the securing of the settlement by an international guarantee. They have already received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they are prepared to enter into discussions on this basis, and His Majesty's Government hope the German Government would for their part also be willing to agree to this course.

If, as His Majesty's Government hope, such discussion lead to agreement the way would be open to the negotiation of that wider and more complete understanding between Great Britain and Germany which both countries desire.

5. His Majesty's Government agree with the German Chancellor that one of the principal dangers in the German-Polish situation arises from the report concerning the treatment of minorities. The present state of tension, with its concomitant frontier incidents, reports of maltreatment and inflammatory propaganda, is a constant danger to peace. It is manifestly a matter of the utmost urgency that all incidents of the kind should be promptly and rigidly suppressed and that unverified reports should not be allowed to circulate, in order that time may be afforded, without provocation on either side, for a full examination of the possibilities of settlement. His Majesty's Government are confident that both Governments concerned are fully alive to these considerations.

6. His Majesty's Government have said enough to make

their own attitude plain in the particular matters at issue between Germany and Poland. They trust that the German Chancellor will not think that, because His Majesty's Government are scrupulous concerning their obligations to Poland, they are not anxious to use all their influence to assist the achievement of a solution which may commend itself both to Germany and to Poland.

That such a settlement should be achieved seems to His Majesty's Government essential, not only for reasons directly arising in regard to the settlement itself, but also because of the wider considerations of which the German Chancellor has spoken with such conviction.

7. It is unneccessary in the present reply to stress the advantage of a peaceful settlement over a decision to settle the questions at issue by force of arms. The results of a decision to use force have been clearly set out in the Prime Minister's letter to the Chancellor of the 22nd August, and His Majesty's Government do not doubt that they are as fully recognized by the Chancellor as by themselves.

On the other hand His Majesty's Government, noting with interest the Germain Chancellor's reference in the message now under consideration to a limitation of armaments, believe that, if a peaceful settlement can be obtained, the assistance of the world could confidently be anticipated for practical measures to enable the transition from preparation for war to the normal activities of peaceful trade to be safely and smoothly effected.

8. A just settlement of these questions between Germany and Poland may open the way to world peace. Failure to reach it would ruin the hopes of better understanding between Germany and Great Britain, would bring the two countries into conflict, and might well plunge the whole world into war. Such an outcome would be a calamity without parallel in history.

The Fuehrer, in his reply handed to the British Ambassador at 6.45 p.m. on 29 August, accepted the British proposal. He drew Britain's attention, however, to the fact that the situation on Germany's Eastern frontier was intolerable for a Great Power and that a state of affairs had now been reached in which continued acquiescence or even passive spectatorship was no longer possible. The Fuehrer further pointed out that perhaps only a few hours yet remained for the elimination of the state of acute tension. The Reich Government had for a long time past been attempting to open up a way for peaceful negotiations without, however, meeting with the support of the Polish Government. Despite their sceptical judgment of the prospects of the proposed direct negotiations, the Reich Government accepted the British proposal and agreed that through the mediation of the British Government, a Polish representative invested with plenipotentiary powers whose arrival they expected on Wednesday, 30 August, should come to Berlin. They would immediately draft proposals for a solution acceptable to themselves and would, if possible, make these proposals available for the British Government before the Polish negotiator arrived.

No. 85 (464)

The Fuehrer's Reply to the British Government, handed to the British Ambassador, 29 August 1939, 6.45 p.m.

(Translation)

The British Ambassador in Berlin has informed the British Government of certain suggestions which I felt it incumbent upon me to put forward, in order:

1. to express once more the desire of the German Government for sincere Anglo-German understanding, co-operation and friendship;

2. to leave no room for doubt that such an understanding cannot be purchased at the expense of Germany's renunciation of her vital interests or even by the sacrifice of claims based just as much on general human rights as on the national dignity and honour of our nation.

It was with satisfaction that the German Government learned from the written reply of the British Government and the verbal declarations of the British Ambassador, that the British Government for their part are also prepared to improve Anglo-German relations and to develop and to foster these in the spirit of the German suggestions.

The British Government are likewise convinced that the removal of the tension between Germany and Poland, which has become intolerable, is indispensable if this hope is to be realized.

Since the autumn of 1938 and for the last time in March 1939, verbal and written proposals have been submitted to the Polish Government, which, in consideration of the friendship then existing between Germany and Poland, might have led to a settlement of the questions under dispute which would have been acceptable to both parties. The British Government are aware that the Polish Government saw fit to reject these proposals finally in March of this year. At the same time the Polish Government made their rejection a pretext or an occasion for the adoption of military measures which have since then been continued on an ever-increasing scale. Poland had, in fact, mobilized as early as the middle of last month. In connection with the mobilization, numerous incidents took place in the Free City of Danzig at the instigation of the Polish authorities, and demands of a more or less threatening character amounting to an ultimatum were addressed to the Free City of Danzig. The closing of the frontier, which was at first in the nature of a customs measure, was afterwards carried out on military

lines and was extended to affect traffic with the object of bringing about the political disintegration and the economic ruin of this German community.

Furthermore, the large group of Germans living in Poland was subjected to atrocious and barbarous illtreatment and to other forms of persecution which resulted in some cases in the death by violence of many Germans domiciled there or in their deportation under the most cruel circumstances. Such a situation is intolerable for a Great Power and has now forced Germany after months of inactive spectatorship to undertake the necessary steps for the protection of her rightful interests. The German Government can only most seriously assure the British Government that a state of affairs has now been reached in which continued acquiescence or even passive spectatorship is no longer possible.

The demands of the German Government imply a revision of the Treaty of Versailles in this area, a fact which was recognised as necessary from the very outset; they constitute the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany and the safeguarding of the German minorities domiciled in those territories in Polish possession.

The Reich Government note with satisfaction that the British Government are also convinced on principle that some solution must be found for the state of affairs which has now developed. They further consider they may assume that the British Government entertain no doubt on the fact that this is a state of affairs which can no longer be remedied in a matter of days or even weeks but for the elimination of which perhaps only a few hours yet remain. For in view of the disorganized state of Poland we must at any moment be prepared for the possibility of events occurring which Germany could not possibly tolerate.

If the British Government still believe that these grave differences can be solved by direct negotiations, the Reich Government on their part regret at the outset that they are

unable to share such an opinion. They have already tried to open up a way for peaceful negotiations of this nature, without meeting with the support of the Polish Government, and only seeing their efforts rejected by the abrupt initiation of measures of a military character in accordance, with the general development indicated above.

There are two factors which the British Government consider important:

1. to remove most speedily the imminent danger of a conflagration by means of direct negotiations, and
2. to give the necessary economic and political safeguards by means of international guarantees for the future existence of the remaining Polish State.

To that, the Reich Government desire to make the following statement:

Despite their sceptical judgment of the prospects of such direct negotiations, the Reich Government are nevertheless prepared to accept the English proposal, and to enter into direct discussions. They do so solely because—as already emphasized—the written communication from the British Government, which they have received, gives them the impression that the latter also desire a friendly agreement along the lines indicated to their Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson. The German Government desire in this way to give to the British Government and to the British people a proof of the sincerity of the German intention of arriving at a state of permanent friendship with Great Britain.

The Reich Government nevertheless feel bound to point out to the British Government that in the case of a reorganization of the territorial conditions in Poland, the Reich Government are no longer in a position to take upon themselves any guarantees, or to participate in any guarantees, without the co-operation of the U. S. S. R.

The Reich Government in their proposals moreover never had the intention of attacking vital Polish interests or of

questioning the existence of an independent Polish State. Under these conditions, the Reich Government therefore agree to accept the proposed intermediation of the British Government to send to Berlin a Polish representative invested with plenipotentiary powers. They expect his arrival on Wednesday, 30 August 1939.

The Reich Government will immediately draft the proposals for a solution acceptable to them, and, if possible, will make such proposals also available for the British Government before the Polish negotiator arrives.

Poland's reply was to order general mobilization

No. 86 (465)

The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office

Telephone message, 30 August 1939, 5.30 p.m.

(Translation)

Notices ordering a general mobilization have been posted in Poland for one hour. The first day of mobilization is 31 August; everybody in possession of a white mobilization card must report at once.

Once again the British Government took their time in replying to the German suggestion regarding the dispatch of a Polish plenipotentiary, and it was not until midnight of 30 August, that is to say, after the elapse of the day on which the Reich Government had expected the Polish plenipotentiary to arrive, that Sir Nevile Henderson handed over the British Government's reply, declaring at the same time that the British Government were not in a position to advise the Polish Government to dispatch an emissary, but suggested

that Germany should approach Poland in the normal diplomatic way. In their Memorandum the British Government confirmed the fact that the Reich Government had accepted the British proposals and said that although they realized the danger arising from the proximity of two mobilized armies standing face to face, they considered it impracticable to establish contact as early as that day, viz. 30 August.

Britain therefore allowed more than twenty-four hours to elapse without establishing direct contact as suggested by herself and agreed to by Germany.

The only course left open to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs in these circumstances was to state that Poland's reply had been to order general mobilization and that Germany had waited in vain for the arrival of a Polish representative. In order to show what Germany had intended to propose to the Polish plenipotentiary, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs read aloud the German proposals which had been drawn up meantime and which, tabulated in the form of sixteen points, represented the fairest possible solution of the questions under dispute and were intended by the German Government to form a basis for negotiation.

No. 87 (466)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the British Ambassador, 30 August 1939, at midnight

(Translation)

Memo by Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

Sir Nevile Henderson handed over the Memorandum of the British Government given in the Annex*. He added that he had been instructed to discuss two additional points orally.

Complete restraint was only to be expected from the Polish Government if the German Government adopted the same attitude on their side of the frontier and if no provocation by the German minority in Poland took place. Reports were current to the effect that the Germans in Poland committed acts of sabotage which would justify the adoption of the most severe counter-measures by the Polish Government. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs objected strongly to this remark. Germany, he said, was aware only of acts of provocation committed by the Poles, but Polish propaganda appeared to have done its work with the British Government. The most outrageous acts of sabotage were committed by the Poles. He refused to discuss this matter at all with the British Government.

Sir Nevile Henderson's further instructions referred to the German Government's reply of the previous day, in which the German Government had declared themselves prepared to establish direct contact with Poland if the Polish Government would immediately despatch a plenipotentiary. The British Government were not in a position to advise the Polish Government to accept this procedure. They suggested that the German Government should adopt the normal diplomatic way i. e. hand their proposals to the Polish Ambassador in order to set matters going and make it possible for the Polish Ambassador to co-operate with his Government in preparing for direct German-Polish negotiations. If the German Government would also communicate these proposals to the British Government and the latter were of the opinion that the proposals constituted a reasonable basis for a settlement of the problems to be dicussed, they would use their influence in Warsaw to achieve a settlement.

Referring to the last paragraph of the German reply of the previous day, Sir Nevile Henderson asked whether the German proposals were ready and whether these proposals could be handed over to him.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs replied in the first place that British intervention had up till now led to only one tangible result, namely, general mobilization on the part of Poland, and secondly that Germany had been counting on the arrival of a Polish representative that day. This had not constituted an ultimatum, as the British Ambassador had erroneously assumed, but, as the Fuehrer had already explained on the previous day, a practical proposal dictated by prevailing conditions. By midnight Germany had received no answer from Poland. The question of a possible proposal therefore no longer existed. In order to show, however, what proposals Germany had intended to make if the Polish representative had come, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs read aloud the German proposals contained in the Annex** and explained them in detail.

Sir Nevile Henderson replied that the statement of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs that in consequence of the non-arrival of the Polish representative by midnight on Wednesday the proposals which the German Government had originally intended to make no longer held good, seemed to confirm his interpretation of the proposal as an ultimatum.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs once more emphatically opposed this conception and referred to the statement made by the Fuehrer on the previous day that this urgency was the outcome of the fact that two fully mobilized armies were standing face to face within firing distance of each other and that at any moment some incident might lead to serious conflict.

In conclusion, Sir Nevile Henderson suggested that the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs should ask the Polish Ambassador to call on him and hand him the German proposals.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs rejected this suggested procedure as far as he personally was concerned and

concluded the conversation by saying that all decisions must rest with the Fuehrer. Schmidt

* *Cf. Annex I.*
** *Cf. Annex II.*

Annex I

Memorandum from the British Government, handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the British Ambassador, 30 August 1939, at midnight

1. His Majesty's Government appreciate the friendly reference in the declaration contained in the reply of the German Government to the latter's desire for an Anglo-German understanding and to their statement of the influence which this consideration has exercised upon their policy.

2. His Majesty's Government repeat that they reciprocate the German Government's desire for an improvement in relations, but it will be recognised that they could not sacrifice the interests of friends in order to obtain that improvement. They fully understand that the German Government cannot sacrifice Germany's vital interests, but the Polish Government are in the same position, and His Majesty's Government believe that the vital interests of the two countries are not incompatible.

3. His Majesty's Government note that the German Government accept the British proposal and are prepared to enter into direct discussions with the Polish Government.

4. His Majesty's Government understand that the German Government accept in principle the condition that any settlement should be made subject to an international guarantee. The question of who shall participate in this guarantee will have to be discussed further, and His Majesty's Government hope that to avoid loss of time the German Government will

take immediate steps to obtain the assent of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics whose participation in the guarantee His Majesty's Government have always assumed.

5. His Majesty's Government also note that the German Government accept the position of the British Government as to Poland's vital interests and independence.

6. His Majesty's Government must make an express reservation in regard to the statement of particular demands put forward by the German Government in an earlier passage in their reply. They understand that the German Government are drawing up proposals for a solution. No doubt these proposals will be fully examined during the discussions. It can then be determined how far they are compatible with the essential conditions which His Majesty's Government have stated and which the German Government have expressed their willingness to accept.

7. His Majesty's Government are at once informing the Polish Government of the German Government's reply. The method of contact and the arrangements for discussions must obviously be agreed with all urgency between the German Government and the Polish Government, but in His Majesty's Government's view it would be impracticable to establish contact so early as to-day.

8. His Majesty's Government fully recognize the need for speed in the initiation of discussions and they share the apprehensions of the Chancellor arising from the proximity of two mobilised armies standing face to face. They would accordingly most strongly urge that both parties should undertake that during negotiations no aggressive military movements will take place. His Majesty's Government feel confident that they could obtain such an undertaking from the Polish Government, if the German Government would give similar assurances.

9. Further His Majesty's Government would suggest that a temporary *modus vivendi* might be arranged for Danzig.

which might prevent the occurrence of incidents tending to render German-Polish relations more difficult.

Berlin, 30 August 1939.

Annex II

Proposal for a settlement of the problem of Danzig and the Polish Corridor and of the German-Polish Minorities question

(Translation)

The situation between the German Reich and Poland is at the present time such that any further incident may lead to an outbreak of hostilities between the military forces of the two countries, which have already taken up their position on the respective sides of the frontier. Any peaceful solution of the problem must be of such a nature that the events which originally brought about this state of affairs cannot be repeated on the next occasion thus causing a state of tension not only in Eastern Europe but also elsewhere.

The causes of this development are to be found in

1. the intolerable demarcation of the frontiers as dictated in the Treaty of Versailles,
2. the intolerable treatment of the minority in the territories cut off from the Reich.

In putting forward these proposals, the Reich Government are attempting to find a final solution putting an end to the intolerable situation arising from the present demarcation of frontiers, securing to both parties their vital lines of communication, eliminating as far as possible the problem of the minorities and, in so far as this should prove impossible, rendering the fate of the minorities bearable by effectively guaranteeing their rights.

The Reich Government feel convinced that it is indispensable that economic and personal damage inflicted since 1918 should

be investigated, and full compensation made therefor. Of course, the Reich Government regard this obligation as binding upon both parties.

The above considerations give rise to the following concrete proposals:

1. By reason of its purely German character and the unanimous will of its population, the Free City of Danzig shall be returned forthwith to the German Reich.
2. The territory known as the Polish Corridor, that is to say, the territory bounded by the Baltic Sea and a line running from Marienwerder to Graudenz, Kulm, Bromberg, (including these towns), and then in a westerly direction towards Schönlanke, shall itself decide whether it shall become part of the German Reich or remain with Poland.
3. For that purpose, a plebiscite shall be held in this territory. All Germans who were domiciled in this area on the first of January 1918 or who were born there on or before that day, also all Poles, Cassubians, etc., who were domiciled in this area on that day or who were born there on or before the above mentioned date, shall be entitled to vote. Germans who have been expelled from this territory shall return for the purpose of registering their votes.

   In order to ensure an impartial plebiscite and to guarantee that the necessary and extensive preparations for the plebiscite shall be carried out correctly, an International Commission like the one formed in connection with the Saar pebliscite, and consisting of members appointed by the four Great Powers, Italy, the U.S.S.R., France and Great Britain, shall be formed immediately, and placed in charge of this territory. This commission shall exercise sovereign rights through-

out the territory. To that end, the territory shall be evacuated by the Polish military forces, by the Polish police and by the Polish authorities within the shortest possible time to be agreed upon.

4. The Polish port of Gdynia to the extent of the Polish settlement is not included in this area but, as a matter of principle, is recognized as Polish territory.

   The details of the boundaries of this Polish port shall be decided on by Germany and Poland, and if necessary established by an International Court of Arbitration.

5. In order to allow for ample time for the necessary and extensive preparations for the carrying out of an impartial plebiscite, this plebiscite shall not take place before a period of twelve months has elapsed.

6. In order that during that period, Germany's lines of communication with East Prussia and Poland's access to the sea may be unrestrictedly ensured, certain roads and railway lines shall be determined, in order to facilitate unobstructed transit. In this connection only such taxes may be levied as are necessary for the upkeep of the lines of communication and for the carrying out of transport.

7. The allocation of this territory shall be decided on by the absolute majority of the votes cast.

8. In order to secure, after the plebiscite (irrespective of the result thereof), Germany's unrestricted communication with the province of Danzig—East Prussia, and Poland's access to the sea, Germany shall, should the territory be returned to Poland as a result of the plebiscite, be given an exterritorial traffic zone running, from say, Bütow to Danzig or Dirschau, for the purpose of building a Reich Motor Road (Reichsautobahn) and also a four-track railway line. The construction of the motor road and of the railway shall be carried out in

such a manner that Polish lines of communication are not affected thereby, i. e. they are to be overbridged or underbridged. This zone shall be one kilometer in width and shall be German territory.

Should the result of the plebiscite be in favour of Germany, Poland shall have the same rights as Germany would have had, to build an exterritorial road and railway connection in order to secure her free and unrestricted access to her port of Gdynia.

9. In the event of the Polish Corridor being returned to the Reich, the latter declares herself prepared to arrange with Poland for an exchange of population of the extent to which this could be carried out according to the conditions in the Corridor.

10. Any special rights claimed by Poland within the port of Danzig shall, on the basis of parity, be negotiated in exchange of equal rights for Germany at the port of Gdynia.

11. In order to avoid any sense of menace or danger on either side, Danzig and Gdynia henceforth shall have a purely commercial character, i. e. neither of these places shall be provided with means of military defence or fortifications.

12. The Peninsula of Hela, which according to the result of the plebiscite would be allocated either to Poland or to Germany, shall also be demilitarized in any case.

13. The Reich Government having most serious complaints to make about the treatment of the minority by the Poles, the Polish Government on the other hand considering themselves entitled to raise complaints against Germany, both parties agree to submit these complaints to an International Commission of Investigation charged to investigate into all complaints about economic and personal damage, as well as other acts of terrorism.

Germany and Poland bind themselves to indemnify the minorities on either side for any economic damages and other wrongs inflicted upon them since 1918; and/or to revoke all expropriations or otherwise to completely indemnify the respective person or persons for these and other encroachments upon economic life.

14. In order to free the Germans remaining in Poland, as well as the Poles remaining in Germany, from the feeling of being deprived of the benefits of International Law, and above all to afford them the certainty of their not being made to take part in actions and in furnishing services of a kind not compatible with their national convictions, Germany and Poland mutually agree to safeguard the rights of their respective minorities by most comprehensive and binding agreements for the purpose of warranting these minorities the preservation, free development and cultivation of their national customs, habits and traditions, to grant them in particular and for that purpose the form of organization considered necessary by them. Both parties undertake not to draft the members of the minority into military service.

15. In case of an agreement on the basis of these proposals being reached, Germany and Poland declare themselves prepared immediately to order and carry through the demobilization of their respective armed forces.

16. Any additional measures required to hasten the carrying through of the above agreement shall be mutually agreed upon between Germany and Poland.

On the morning of 31 August, Sir Nevile Henderson informed the Polish Ambassador in Berlin of the contents of the sixteen-point proposal put forward by Germany. The Polish Ambassador in the course of that same morning by

telephone informed his own Government in Warsaw of this proposal. This information is contained in Sir Nevile Henderson's own final report to his Government.

It had to be admitted in the official German report made at 9 p.m. on 31 August, however, that Germany, after having waited in vain on 30 August for the arrival of a Polish plenipotentiary, had vainly expected him to arrive in the course of the ensuing twenty-four hours, since the Polish Ambassador, who had called at the German Foreign Office, was not authorized to negotiate but had merely stated that Poland "was weighing favourably the British Government's suggestion."

No. 88 (468)

Official German Communication, 31 August 1939, 9 p.m.

(Translation)

In a Note dated 28 August 1939, addressed to the German Government, the British Government declared themselves prepared to offer their services as intermediaries in arranging direct negotiations between Germany and Poland for the settlement of the problems under dispute. In this Note they left no room for doubt that in view of the continued incidents and the general state of tension throughout Europe they also were aware of the urgency of such action.

In spite of their scepticism regarding the willingness of the Polish Government to reach any agreement, the German Government, in a reply dated 29 August 1939, declared themselves prepared in the interests of peace to accept British intermediation or suggestions. Taking into account all the circumstances prevailing at the moment, they considered it necessary to point out in their reply that, if the danger of catastrophe is to be avoided at all, quick and immediate action

is indispensable. The German Government have therefore declared themselves willing to receive a delegate appointed by the Polish Government by the evening of 30 August 1939, provided that this delegate should be invested with full power not only to take part in discussions but to negotiate and to take a final decision.

The German Government have further expressed the hope that they would be able to submit to the British Government the gist of the proposed agreement before the arrival of the Polish delegate in Berlin.

Instead of a declaration regarding the arrival of an authorized Polish representative, the German Government, as a first reply to their readiness to negotiate, received the news of the Polish mobilization, and it was only towards midnight on 30 August 1939, that they received the assurance by Britain, couched in more general terms, that she would use her influence to arrange for the opening of negotiations.

Owing to the non-arrival of the Polish delegate who was expected by the Reich Government, the primary condition for informing the British Government, who had themselves recommended direct negotiations between Germany and Poland, of the standpoint taken by the Reich as to the basis for such negotiations, no longer existed. Nevertheless, Herr von Ribbentrop, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, acquainted the British Ambassador, when the latter handed over the last British Note, with the exact wording of the German proposals as prepared for the expected arrival of the Polish plenipotentiary.

Under these circumstances the German Government considered that they had every right to expect that, at least subsequently to this, the nomination of a Polish delegate would immediately take place. It was clearly too much to expect of the German Government that they should continue not only to reiterate their willingness to enter upon such negotiations,

but even to sit and wait and allow themselves to be put off by the Polish side with feeble subterfuges and empty declarations.

In the meantime a *démarche* by the Polish Ambassador has again shown that not even he is authorized to enter upon any discussion whatsoever, much less to negotiate.

Thus the Fuehrer and the German Government have now waited for two days in vain for the arrival of an authorized Polish delegate.

Under these circumstances the German Government cannot but regard their proposals as having once more been rejected in effect, although they are of the opinion that in the form in which they were also communicated to the British Government, they were made in a spirit of excessive goodwill and fairness and could well have been accepted.

The Government of the Reich consider it appropriate to inform the public of the proposed basis for negotiation as communicated to the British Ambassador by Herr von Ribbentrop, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.*

* *In the text of the official German Communication there followed here the proposal printed above under No. 87, Annex II.*

The announcement made by the Warsaw Broadcasting Station at 11 p.m. on 31 August proves that Poland no longer desired to come to an understanding, but that she considered that the time had come to make full use of the British carte blanche *and to play the part tacitly assigned her by Britain, namely, to cause the outbreak of war with Germany.*

No. 89 (469)

Announcement by the Polish Broadcasting Station at Warsaw, 31 August 1939, 11 p.m.

(Translation)

The publication to-day of the official German *communiqué* has clearly revealed the aims and intentions of German policy. It proves the undisguised aggressive intentions of Germany towards Poland. The conditions under which the Third Empire is prepared to negotiate with Poland are: Danzig must immediately return to the Reich. Pomorze together with the cities of Bromberg and Graudenz are to be subjected to a plebiscite, for which all Germans who left that territory for any reason whatsoever since the year 1918 may return. The Polish military forces and the police force shall be evacuated from Pomorze. The police force of England, France, Italy and the U. S. S. R. will be placed in charge of the territory. The plebiscite is to take place after twelve months have elapsed. The territory of the Hela Peninsula will also be included in the plebiscite; Gdynia as a Polish town is excluded. Irrespective of the result of the plebiscite an exterritorial road one kilometre wide is to be constructed . . . .

The German News Agency announces that the time allowed for the acceptance of these conditions expired yesterday. Germany has waited in vain for a Polish delegate. The answer given was the military orders issued by the Polish Government.

Words can now no longer veil the aggressive plans of the new Huns. Germany is aiming at the domination of Europe and is cancelling the rights of nations with as yet unprecedented cynicism. This impudent proposal shows clearly how necessary were the military orders given by the Polish Government.

The actual facts, however, leave no room for doubt as to who was the aggressor. A summary, drawn up by an official in the political department of the German Foreign Office, of official reports received concerning serious incidents on the German-Polish frontier, shows that no less than forty-four such incidents occurred between 25 and 31 August 1939:

No. 90 (470)

List of officially reported serious frontier incidents on the German-Polish frontier between 25 and 31 August 1939, compiled by an official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, 1 September 1939

25 August

1. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.
   Towards 10 p. m. on the farm of the peasant Reinhard Briese, situated directly on the German-Polish frontier at Scharschau, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, a stable burned down. Near the scene of the fire an incendiary bomb of Polish origin was found.

2. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.
   Towards 11 p. m. the property of Martha Zerkowski, a widow, of Schönerswalde, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, situated directly on the German-Polish frontier, was destroyed by arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

3. Report from the State Police-Station at Elbing.
   In the night of 25 August, the property of woodcutter Schlegel of Neukrug, district of Rosenberg,

West Prussia, situated directly on the German-Polish frontier, was destroyed by arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

4. Report from the State Police-Station at Elbing.

In the night of 25 August, the forester's house at Dietrichswalde, district of Marienwerder, situated near the German-Polish frontier, burned down completely as a result of arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

5. Report from the State Police-Station at Elbing.

In the night of 25 August, the property of peasant Gehrke, of Niederzehren, district of Marienwerder, situated near the German-Polish frontier, was destroyed by arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

6. Report from the State Police-Station at Elbing.

In the night of 25 August, signalman's house No. 34 on the railway line Deutsch-Eylau—Alt-Eiche—Soldau was destroyed by a bomb.

7. Report from the State Police-Station at Köslin.

In the night of 25 August, the barn belonging to miller Domke, at Somminer-Mühle, district of Bütow, burned down. Investigation of the scene showed that fire was caused by a bomb with an electric time-fuse. The property was situated directly on the German-Polish frontier.

8. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office, East Prussia.

In the night of 25 August, Polish soldiers blew up and completely destroyed the parts situated on German territory of the highway bridge and the railway bridge Zandersfelde-Neuliebenau.

26 August

1. Report of the Head Customs-House, Neidenburg.

At 12.45 a.m. the sentry in front of the customs-house at Wetzhausen noticed, and challenged a Polish soldier who was mowing towards the customs-house from the wood opposite. The soldier took to flight and was apparently wounded by two shots.
Afterwards it was ascertained that the soldier belonged to a group of six Polish soldiers who had crossed the German-Polish frontier at that spot.

2. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

Towards 3 p. m. the dwelling house and premises belonging to the Werner and Scheffler families at Neukrug, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, situated near the German-Polish frontier, burned down to their foundation as a result of arson. It was ascertained that the perpetrators were from Poland.

3. Report of the Head Customs-House at Lauenburg.

At 11 p.m. Tatolinski, a minority German of Seelau, lying opposite the customs post at Gross Seelnow, escaped across the frontier after his farm had been set on fire by a Polish gang. The Poles fired several shots at him across the frontier.

4. Report of the Head Customs-House at Meseritz.

Minority German fugitives who on 26 August crossed the frontier near Betsche-Süd, were repeatedly shot at by Polish frontier guards, after they had already concealed themselves in a field of maize on German territory.

27 August

1. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

In the early hours a fire destroyed the farm of the

peasant Guzinski of Klein Heyde, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, near the German-Polish frontier. It was ascertained that the Polish incendiaries had come across the frontier.

2. Report from the State Police-Station at Elbing.

Towards 3.15 a. m. a Polish gang, consisting of about 15 men armed with rifles, attacked the railway halt and the saw-mills at Alt-Eiche, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia. After the Poles had fired several shots, they were driven off by a detachment of the German frontier guard.

3. Report of the Customs-House at Lindenhorst.

Towards 4 a. m. a sentry of the frontier guard observed six Polish soldiers moving in the direction of Frontier-Stone No. 127. They then formed up in threes, crossed the German frontier, and proceeded in the direction of the road Neumittelwalde-Schönstein. About 4.25 a. m. the detachment leader of the frontier guard sighted a Polish soldier crawling along the ground. He thereupon fired four shots, and the Poles withdrew.

4. Report of the Head Customs-House at Schneidemühl.

Towards 10.30 a. m. in the region of Vorwerk-Dreilinden, within about 300 metres this side of the frontier, three German guard officers, Captain Täschner, Lieutenant Sebulka and Lieutenant Dinger, were fired at from across the Polish frontier.

5. Report of the Head Customs-House at Neidenburg.

Towards 5 p. m. a patrol of the branch customs-house at Flannberg, stood guard near Point 128, situated at a distance of about 100 metres from the frontier-river Orzyc on the edge of a wood to the west of Flannberg. From the Polish side about 20 shots were suddenly fired, which fell on German territory. As was found out later on, these shots were fired by a

Polish frontier patrol who under the command of a Polish officer had approached the German frontier and opened fire upon a military sentry. It was further ascertained that the Poles had thrown four egg hand-grenades.

6. Report of the Head Customs-House at Kreuzberg.

At about 8.15 p. m. the Customs-House assistant Scheffler was fired on by Poles seven or eight times near Reidenwalde.

7. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office, East Prussia.

Towards 9.45 p. m. the customs guard Will, about to ride away on his bicycle from an estate close to the frontier was fired on several times by Polish frontier guards stationed at Kleinfelde near Mewe.

28 August

1. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

Towards 12.30 a. m. a German field guard posted near the railway bridge Deutsch-Eylau (Neumark) sighted several Polish soldiers on German territory. When the field guard opened fire, the Poles disappeared in the woods while replying to the fire.

2. Report of the State Police-Station at Oppeln.

Towards 1 a. m. in the avenue leading from Ratibor to Hohenbirken, East Upper Silesia, a German anti-aircraft detachment sighted Polish troops on the march who had crossed over into German territory for a distance of about 150 metres. The anti-aircraft detachment thereupon opened fire, and the Polish troops withdrew.

3. Report oft the Head Customs-House at Beuthen.

Towards 1 a. m. several shots were fired from a Polish machine gun. The shots fell close to a machine gun detachment of the frontier guard stationed at the slag heap near the sports ground of the Borsigwerk.

4. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

Towards 1.45 a. m. the field guard at Alt-Eiche, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, was attacked by Polish regulars. The Poles first attacked a group posted at the frontier crossing who thereupon retired as far as the railway station of Alt-Eiche. At that moment about 10 Polish soldiers came from another direction and began to rush at them. The German detachment thereupon moved into position and opened fire. The Poles, who deployed, fired also. Lance-Corporal Grutzinski of Hansdorf fell fatally wounded, and another German soldier was wounded in the shoulder. The Polish soldiers then withdrew to Polish territory.

5. Report of the Head Customs-House at Gleiwitz.

Towards 10.45 p. m. the German customs officials Fleische and Quenzel, stationed at the barrier near the Customs-House at Neuberstein, were fired on from the Polish side with a machine gun and rifles. The Poles only ceased fire after an encounter with German frontier guards lasting 20 minutes.

29 August

1. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

In the early hours Polish soldiers crossed over into German territory near the saw-mills at Alt-Eiche; they were driven back by the German frontier guard.

2. Report of the State Police-Station at Köslin.

In the early morning soldiers of the Polish frontier guard made an armed attack on the German customs-house near the railway station of Sonnenwalde. While resisting them, a German District Customs Commissioner and a German frontier employee were wounded.

3. Report of the State Police-Station at Breslau.

About 1.40 p. m. the customs assistant Dippe was fired on with a rifle by a Polish frontier sentry in a little wood near Neu-Vorberg close to the road from Lesten to Tharlang.

4. Report of the Customs-House at Beuthen.

Towards 9.45 p. m. shots falling on German territory were fired repeatedly by Polish soldiers in the vicinity of Customs-House 3 at Beuthen. First, 20 to 30 pistol shots were fired across the road passing the Customs-House in the direction of the pit yard of the Beuthen mine, and fell about ten metres in front of the third group of a detachment of the 8th Frontier Guard Company. There followed 10 to 15 rifle shots, and immediately afterwards a further four or five shots from an automatic pistol. The German side did not reply to the fire.

5. Report of the Head Customs-House at Gleiwitz.

Towards 11.50 p. m. a Polish formation opened violent fire upon German customs officials and frontier guards on German soil near the Customs-House at Neubersteich. Two light machine-guns which had been placed in position on German territory were unmistakably ascertained, also a heavy machine-gun. After a fight lasting for some time the Poles ceased fire at 1.15 a. m.

1. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

Towards 12.30 a.m. the Customs-House building at Neukrug, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, was attacked from the woods by Polish regulars. The Poles obviously intended to attack the men stationed there from the rear. Behind a garage not very far away they had placed a light machine-gun in position. When the Poles were shot at by the German field guard from a room in the upper storey of the Customs-House building, the Polish machine-gun position was moved into dense undergrowth, which again was immediately taken under fire. The fight lasted until about 5 a.m. A member of the German field guard was fatally wounded. The Customs-House building had several window-panes smashed and the telephone wiring destroyed.

2. Report of the State Police-Station of Elbing.

Towards 12.45 a. m. near the saw-mills at Alt-Eiche, the German frontier guard sighted there to four Polish soldiers at they tried to creep up to the mill. They were driven back by the frontier guard.

3. Report of the State Police-Station at Breslau.

Towards 7 a. m. farmer Ferdinand Braun of Golgas, district of Militsch, was working in the field on the German territory about 100 metres from Frontier Stone 233. He was suddenly fired on by a Polish soldier with a pistol, but remained unhurt.

4. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office at Troppau.

At 3.5 a. m. an aeroplane—apparently German reconnaissance aircraft—flying over German territory

was shot at from Polish territory by anti-aircraft artillery firing from the direction of Oderberg and Wurbitz. Shrapnel pieces were found and kept as evidence.

31 August

1. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

   Towards 1 a.m. the customs building at Neukrug was attacked by about 25 Polish soldiers armed with a light machine-gun. They tried to surround the customs building. The attack was beaten back.

2. Report of the Head Customs-House at Gleiwitz.

   Towards 2 a.m. an attack was made by Poles on the German frontier guard on duty at the Customs-House at Neubersteich. An attack of the Poles on the Customs-House was prevented by German fire.

3. Report of the District Customs Commissioner at Deutsch-Eylau.

   Towards 3 a.m. near Scharschau on German territory an attack was made by Polish troops on a patrol of the German frontier guard. When reinforcements arrived and the fire was answered, the Poles withdrew.

4. Report of the Chief Constable at Gleiwitz.

   Towards 8 p.m. the German Broadcasting Station at Gleiwitz was attacked by a troop of Polish Insurgents and temporarily occupied. The Insurgents were driven off by German frontier police officers. One of the Insurgents was fatally injured.

5. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office at Troppau.

   In the night of 31 August the Customs-House at Hoflinden was attacked by Polish insurgents and temporarily occupied. By a counter attack on the part of an S. S. formation the insurgents were driven off.

6. Report of the State Police-Station at Elbing.

About 12.30 a. m. the customs building at Neukrug was attacked by 30 Polish soldiers armed with machine-guns and rifles. The attack was repulsed by the German field guard.

7. Report of the State Police-Station at Liegnitz.

In the night of 31 August a German customs official near Pfalzdorf, district of Grünberg, at a distance of about 75 metres from the Polish frontier, was fatally injured by Polish troops.

8. Report of the State Police-Station at Liegnitz.

In the night of 31 August near Röhrsdorf in the district of Fraustadt, a German customs official while on duty was shot dead by Polish troops, another was seriously injured.

9. Report of the State Police-Station at Liegnitz.

In the night of 31 August, without any provocation, the Poles made an armed attack on the German Customs-House at Pfalzdorf in the district of Grünberg.

10. Report of the State Police-Station at Liegnitz.

In the night of 31 August German Customs-House at Geyersdorf was temporarily occupied by Polish insurgents, who caused considerable damage.

11. Report of the State Police-Station at Brünn.

In the night of 31 August the Polish frontier guard attacked the German customs building at Hruschau with a machine-gun. The German side replied to the fire. The Poles took to flight.

Schliep

Thus every possibility of reaching a peaceful settlement of the German-Polish crisis was exhausted. Poland had, as the foregoing documents prove, already resorted to force, thereby creating a situation which compelled the Reich Government to

resist force by means of force. The provocative attitude of Poland, which, during the last few days of the crisis, had exceeded every tolerable limit and made an amicable settlement impossible, rendered further delay inadvisable. On the morning of 1 September, the German Armed forces received orders to meet the continuous Polish attacks on German territory by counter-attacks. In his speech to the Reichstag on the morning of 1 September, the Fuehrer finally expounded the German point of view and thereby justified Germany's action in the eyes of the world.

No. 91 (471)

Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, 1 September 1939

(Translation)

Members of the German Reichstag,

For months we have been tormented by a problem once set us by the dictated Treaty of Versailles, which has now assumed such a character as to become utterly intolerable. Danzig was and is a German city. The Corridor was and is German. All these districts owe their cultural development exclusively to the German people, without whom absolute barbarism would prevail in these eastern tracts of country. Danzig was separated from us. The Corridor was annexed by Poland. The German minorities living there were ill-treated in the most appalling manner. More than a million persons with German blood in their veins were compelled to leave their homes as early as 1919/1920. Here, as always, I have attempted to change this intolerable state of affairs by means of peaceful proposals for a revision. It is a lie when the world alleges that we always used pressure in attempting to carry out any revision. There was ample opportunity for fifteen years before National Socialism assumed power to carry through revisions

by means of a peaceful understanding. This was not done. I myself then took the initiative in every single case, not only once, but many times, to bring forward proposals for the revision of absolutely intolerable conditions.

As you know, all these proposals were rejected. I need not enumerate them in detail: proposals for a limitation of armaments, if necessary even for the abolition of armaments, proposals for restrictions on methods of warfare, proposals for eliminating methods of modern warfare, which, in my opinion, are scarcely compatible with International Law. You know the proposals which I made as to the necessity of restoring German sovereign rights in certain territories of the Reich, those countless attempts I made to bring about a peaceful solution of the Austrian problem and, later on, of the Sudetenland, Bohemia and Moravia. It was all in vain. One thing, however, is impossible: to demand that a peaceful revision should be made of an intolerable state of affairs—and then obstinately refuse such a peaceful revision. It is equally impossible to assert that in such a situation to act on one's own initiative in making a revision is to violate a law. For us Germans the dictated Treaty of Versailles is not a law. It will not do to blackmail a person at the point of a pistol with the threat of starvation for millions of people into signing a document and afterwards proclaim that this document with its forced signature was a solemn law.

In the case of Danzig and the Corridor I have again tried to solve the problems by means of peaceful proposals suggesting a discussion. One thing was obvious: they had to be solved. That the date of this solution may perhaps be of little interest to the Western Powers is conceivable. But this date is not a matter of indifference to us. First and foremost, however, it was not and could not be a matter of indifference to the suffering victims. In conversations with Polish statesmen, I have discussed the ideas which you have heard me express here in my last speech to the Reichstag. No one can maintain

that this was an unjust procedure or even unreasonable pressure.

I then had the German proposals clearly formulated and I feel bound to repeat once more that nothing could be fairer or more modest than those proposals submitted by me. And I now wish to declare to the whole world that I, and I alone, was in a position to make such proposals. For I know quite definitely that I was thereby acting contrary to the opinion of millions of Germans.

Those proposals were rejected. But more than that, they were replied to by mobilization, by increased terrorism, by intensified pressure on the German minorities in those areas and by a gradual economic and political strangulation of the Free City of Danzig, which during the past few weeks found its expression in military measures and traffic restrictions. Poland virtually began a war against the Free City of Danzig. Furthermore she was not prepared to settle the problem of the Corridor in a fair manner satisfying the interests of both parties. And lastly, Poland has never thought of fulfilling her obligations with regard to the minorities. In this connection I feel it necessary to state that Germany has fulfilled her obligations in this respect. Minorities domiciled in Germany are not subject to persecution. Let any Frenchman get up and declare that French citizens living in the Saar territory are oppressed, ill-treated or deprived of their rights. No one can make such an assertion.

For four months I have watched these developments without taking action but not without issuing repeated warnings. Recently I have made these warnings more and more emphatic. Over three weeks ago the Polish Ambassador was, at my request, informed that if Poland persisted in sending further notes in the nature of an ultimatum to Danzig and in further oppressing the German minorities, or if attempts were made to bring about the economic ruin of Danzig by means of customs restrictions, Germany would no longer stand aside and remain inactive. I have left no room for doubt that in this

respect the Germany of to-day is not to be confused with post-war Germany.

Attempts have been made to justify the action against the German minorities by declaring that they had given provocation. I am at a loss to know what "provocation" those women and children are supposed to have given who have been ill-treated and deported, or what was the nature of the provocation given by all those who were tortured in the most inhuman and sadistic way before they were finally put to death. One thing I know however: there is not one single Great Power possessed of a feeling of honour, which would countenance such conditions for any length of time.

In spite of all I have made one last attempt. Although possessed of the innermost conviction that the Polish Government—perhaps also owing to their dependence on a now unchained wild soldiery—are not in earnest as regards a real understanding, I nevertheless accepted a proposal of mediation submitted by the British Government. The latter proposed not to carry on any negotiations themselves, they assured me however of their establishing a direct connection between Poland and Germany for the purpose of thus once more facilitating direct discussions.

I must here state the following: I accepted that proposal. For these discussions I had drawn up the fundamentals which are known to you. And then I and my Government sat expectantly for two whole days in order to find out whether the Polish Government saw fit finally to dispatch an authorized representative or not. Up to last night the Polish Government did not dispatch an authorized representative, but informed us by their Ambassador that at present they were considering the question whether and to what extent they might be able to accept the British proposals; of the result they would inform Britain.

Members of the Reichstag, if such treatment could be meted out to the German Reich and its Head, and if the German

Reich and its Head were to submit to such treatment, the German nation would not deserve a better fate than to vanish from the political arena. My love of peace and my endless patience must not be mistaken for weakness, much less for cowardice. Last night I informed the British Government that things being as they are, I have found it impossible to detect any inclination on the part of the Polish Government to enter into a really serious discussion with us.

These proposals of mediation are thus wrecked, for in the meantime the answer to these offers of mediation had been, first, the order for Polish general mobilization, and, secondly, serious additional outrages. Repetitions of the latter incidents occurred last night. Only recently during one single night 21 frontier incidents occurred, last night there were 14, three of them of a most serious character.

For that reason, I have now decided to address Poland in exactly the same language as Poland has been applying to us for months.

If there are statesmen in the West who declare that their interests are involved, I can only regret the fact. Their opinion, however, cannot for one single minute persuade me to deviate from the execution of my duties. I have solemnly declared and repeat once more that we have no claims at all on these Western States, and shall never demand anything from them. I have declared that the frontier between Germany and France is final. I have repeatedly offered Britain our friendship, and if necessary closest co-operation. Love, however, is not a one-sided affair, but must be responded to by the other side. Germany has no interests in the West, our fortifications in the West *(Westwall)* are for all times to become the frontier of the Reich. We have no other aims in the future, and this attitude of the Reich will remain unchanged.

Some of the other European states understand our attitude. First of all I would thank Italy for having supported us

all this time. You will also understand that we do not want to make an appeal for any foreign help in this struggle. This task of ours we shall solve ourselves.

The neutral states have assured us of their neutrality exactly as we previously guaranteed their neutrality. This assurance we consider a sacred obligation, and as long as nobody infringes upon their neutrality, we too shall painstakingly observe it. Because, what could we expect or desire from them?

I feel very much gratified at being able to inform you here of an event of special importance. You are aware that Russia and Germany are governed by two different doctrines. There was only one single question to be cleared: Germany has no intention of exporting her doctrine, and as long as Soviet Russia does not intend to export her own doctrine to Germany, I no longer see any reason why we should ever be opponents again. Both of us are agreed on this one point: any struggle between us would only result in the benefit of others. We have therefore resolved to enter into an agreement which will exclude any application of force between us in the future, which imposes on us an obligation to consult with each other in certain European questions, which facilitates economic collaboration and above all warrants that the energies of our two great states are not consumed by mutual enmity.

Any attempt on the part of the Western States to alter these facts will prove futile, and in that connection I should like to state one thing: this political decision signifies an enormous change in future developments and is absolutely final!

I believe that the whole German people will welcome this political attitude. In the Great War, Russia and Germany fought against each other and were both of them ultimate sufferers. That shall and will never happen again! Yesterday, the Non-aggression and Consultation Pact, which came

into force the day it was signed, was ratified in Moscow and in Berlin.

In Moscow the Pact was acclaimed just as you have acclaimed it here. I approve of every word in the speech made by M. Molotow, the Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

Our aims: I am determined to solve,

firstly, the Danzig question,

secondly, the Corridor question,

thirdly, to see to it that a change takes place in Germany's relations to Poland, which will ensure a peaceful co-existence of the two States.

I am determined to fight either until the present Polish Government are disposed to effect this change or until another Polish Government are prepared to do so.

I am determined to eliminate from the German frontiers the element of insecurity, the atmosphere which permanently resembles that of civil war. I shall see to it that on the eastern frontier the same peaceful conditions prevail as on our other frontiers.

All actions in fulfilment of this aim will be carried out in such a way as not to contradict the proposals which I made known to you here, Members of the Reichstag, as my proposals to the rest of the world.

That is, I will not wage war against women and children! I have instructed my Air Force to limit their attacks to military objectives. But should the enemy think this gives him *carte blanche* to fight in the opposite way, then he will get an answer which will drive him out of his senses!

In the night Polish soldiers of the regular Army fired the first shots in our own territory. Since 5.45 a. m. we have been returning their fire. And from now onwards every bomb will be answered by another bomb. Whoever fights with poison gas will be fought with poison gas. Whoever disregards the rules of human warfare can but expect us to do the same.

I will carry on this fight, no matter against whom, until such time as the safety of the Reich and its rights are secured!

For more than six years now I have been engaged on building up the German armed forces. During this period more than 90 milliard Reichsmark have been expended in creating our armed forces. To-day, they are the best equipped in the world and are far superior to those of 1914. My confidence in them can never be shaken.

In calling up these forces, and in expecting the German people to make sacrifices, if necessary unlimited sacrifices, I have only done what I have a right to do; for I myself am just as ready to-day as I was in the past to make every personal sacrifice. There is nothing I demand of any German which I myself was not prepared to do at any moment for more than four years. There shall not be any deprivations for Germans in which I myself shall not immediately share. From this moment my whole life shall belong more than ever to my people. I now want to be nothing but the first soldier of the German Reich.

Therefore, I have once again put on that uniform which was always so sacred and dear to me. I shall not lay it aside until after the victory—or I shall not live to see the end.

Should anything happen to me in this war, my first successor shall be Party Member Göring. Should anything happen to Party Member Göring, his successor shall be Party Member Hess. To these men as your leaders you would then owe the same absolute loyalty and obedience as you owe me. In the event that something fatal should happen to Party Member Hess, I am about to make legal provisions for the convocation of a Senate appointed by me, who shall then elect the worthiest, that is to say the most valiant among themselves.

As a National Socialist and a German soldier I enter upon

this fight with a stout heart! My whole life was but one continus struggle for my people, for its rebirth, for Germany, and that whole struggle was inspired by one single conviction: Faith in my people!

One word I have never known: Capitulation. If, however, there should be any one who thinks that we are on the verge of hard times, I would urge him to consider the fact that at one time a Prussian king, ruling over a ridiculously small state, confronted one of the greatest coalitions ever known and came forth victorious after three campaigns simply because he was possessed of that undaunted spirit and firm faith which are required of us in these times.

As for the rest of the world, I can only assure them that November 1918 shall never occur again in German history.

I ask of every German what I myself am prepared to do at any moment: to be ready to lay down his life for his people and for his country.

If any one thinks that he can evade this national duty directly or indirectly, he will perish. We will have nothing to do with traitors. We are only acting in accordance with our old principle: Our own life matters nothing, all that matters is that our people, that Germany shall live.

I expect of you, as deputies of the Reich, that you will do your duty in whatever position you are called upon to fill. You must bear the standard of resistence, cost what it may. Let no one report to me at any time that his province, his district, his group or his cell are losing heart. It is you who are responsible for public feeling. I am responsible for public feeling throughout Germany and you are responsible for public feeling in your provinces and districts. No one has the right to shelve this responsibility. The sacrifice that is demanded of us is not greater than the sacrifice which has been made by many generations in the past. All those men who before us have trodden the

hardest and most difficult path for Germany's sake did nothing less than we are called upon to do, the sacrifice they made was no less costly, no less painful, and therefore no easier than the sacrifice that may be demanded of us.

Every German woman, too, I expect to take her place with unflinching discipline in this great fighting community.

German Youth, needless to say, will fulfill heart and soul what is expected and demanded of them by the nation and by the National-Socialist State.

If we form this community, fused together, ready for everything, determined never to capitulate, our firm resolve will master every emergency.

I conclude with the words with which I once started my fight for power in the Reich. At that time I said: "If our will is so strong that no emergency can break it, then our will and our good German sword will master and subjugate even need and distress."

Germany—Sieg Heil!

Even after the cannon had begun their thunder, Germany hoped and endeavoured to localize the conflict and prevent other countries from becoming involved in a general war. The decision lay with the Western Powers—would they burden themselves with the responsibility of unconditionally fulfilling the obligations undertaken on behalf of an arrogant Poland and thus allow the German-Polish conflict to assume the proportions of a European war? That Great Britain was determined to do so, is finally proved by the Note which Sir Nevile Henderson handed to the German Foreign Office at 9 p. m. on 1 September. In this Note the British Government demanded the suspension of "all aggressive action against Poland" as well as assurances that the Reich Government were "prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory", otherwise Great Britain would "without hesitation

fulfil her obligations to Poland", that is to say, make war on Germany. An hour later, the French Ambassador presented a Note couched in identical terms.

No. 92 (472)

*Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the British Ambassador, 1 September 1939, 9 p. m.
Memo by Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary*

(Translation in part)

On behalf of his Government Sir Nevile Henderson handed over the following Note, to which he also added an unofficial written translation in German:

Berlin, 1 September 1939

Your Excellency,

On the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs I have the honour to make the following communication.

Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland.

Information which has reached His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks on Polish towns are proceeding.

In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of the United Kingdom and France that by their action the German Government have created conditions (viz. an aggressive act of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland) which calls for the implementation by the Governments of the United Kingdom and France of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.

I am accordingly to inform Your Excellency that, unless the German Government are prepared to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will without hesitation fulfil their obligations to Poland.

I avail myself etc.

Nevile Henderson

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that no German act of aggression had taken place but that for months Poland had provoked Germany. It was not Germany that had mobilized against Poland, but Poland against Germany. In addition to that, on the previous day regular and irregular Polish units had invaded German territory.

He would submit the Note handed to him by the British Ambassador to the Fuehrer and then reply at once. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs added that if the British Government had been as active in Poland as they now apparently intended to be in Germany, a settlement with Poland would have been reached long ago.

Sir Nevile Henderson replied that be would communicate these remarks to his Government and asked that the Fuehrer might be informed of the contents of the Note. He asked for as speedy an answer as possible.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs replied there had really been no reason to notify the British Government of the German proposals, as these proposals had become null and void by the non-appearance of the Polish negotiator. In spite of this he (the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs) had read these proposals to Sir Nevile Henderson in the secret hope that Britain might still bring Poland to see reason. The Fuehrer had waited another whole day in vain—Poland had only replied by new and grave provocations.

Sir Nevile Henderson replied that he greatly deplored that the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the course of his last conversation, had refused to hand over a copy of the proposals to him (Henderson). It was comprehensible that he had not understood most of it as the German text of this rather long and complicated document had been read so quickly.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs drew attention to the fact that he had read the documents slowly and distinctly and that he had even given oral explanations on the main points (Danzig, plebiscite in the Corridor, protection of minorities). He had not been authorized to hand over the document to him, and had therefore read it hoping that on the next day at least Poland would agree to it. The Fuehrer had waited another whole day and had finally come to the conclusion that Britain did not wish to do anything further.

When Sir Nevile Henderson once more expressed his regret that the proposals had not been handed over to him in spite of his request, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs repeated that he had read the document slowly and had explained several points so that he was justified in believing that Sir Nevile Henderson had understood everything.

Schmidt

At this juncture, Signor Mussolini made a last effort to mediate by proposing an armistice and the calling of a conference within two or three days.

No. 93 (474)

Communication handed to the German Foreign Office by the Italian Ambassador on the morning of 2 September 1939

(Translation)

For your information Italy communicates to you, naturally leaving every decision to the Fuehrer, that she is still in a position to obtain the consent of France, England and Poland to a conference on the following basis:

1. An armistice, leaving the armies where they now are;
2. The calling of a conference within two or three days;
3. A solution of the Polish-German conflict, which, as matters lie to-day, would certainly be favourable to Germany.

This idea, which originated with the Duce, is to-day particularly advocated by France.

The Reich Government declared themselves ready to agree to this proposal. The Italian Ambassador was duly informed of this fact which was made public in the Memorandum of 3 September 1939 (No. 97 § 3). The French Government likewise replied in the affirmative, as is known from a message issued by the Havas News Agency on 2 September:

No. 94 (475)

Information from the Havas News Agency, 2 September 1939

(Translation)

The French Government as well as several other Governments were informed yesterday of an Italian proposal for a settlement of the European difficulties. After discussing the proposal the French Government gave a reply in the affirmative.

The above message was afterwards withdrawn, under pressure, as it transpired, from Britain. Meantime, Britain had forced the French Government to adopt the British attitude, i. e., insistence on the withdrawal of the German troops, which attitude was announced by Lord Halifax in a statement made in the House of Lords on the same afternoon, 2 September.

No. 95 (476)

Extract from a Statement made by Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Lords on the afternoon of 2 September 1939

....Up to the present no reply has been received to the warning message delivered to Germany last night.

It was possible that delay had been due to proposals put forward by the Italian Government that hostilities should cease and that there would be immediately a conference between Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany and Italy.

The British Government would not find it possible to take part in a conference when Poland was being subjected to invasion and her towns were under bombardment and Danzig had been made the subject of unilateral settlement by force...

A similar statement was made at the same time in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister.

Thus Signor Mussolini's effort at mediation was accepted by Germany and France but frustrated by Britain at the very moment when success seemed within reach. Instead, at 9 a. m. on 3 September, Britain sent Germany an ultimatum in which she repeated her demands for the suspension of all aggressive action against Poland and the withdrawal of the German forces and declared that, in the event of a refusal, a state of war would exist between the two countries as from the hour of the time limit, i. e., 11 a. m.

No. 96 (477)

Note handed to the German Foreign Office by the British Ambassador, 3 September 1939, 9 a. m.

3 September 1939

Your Excellency,

In the communication which I had the honour to make to you on 1st September I informed you, on the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that, unless the German Government were prepared to give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would without hesitation fulfil their obligations to Poland.

Although this communication was made more than twenty-four hours ago, no reply has been received, but German attacks upon Poland have been continued and intensified. I have accordingly the honour to inform you that, unless not later than 11 a. m. British Summer Time to-day 3rd September satisfactory assurances to the above effect have been given by the German Government and have reached His Majesty's Government in London, a state of war will exist between the two countries as from that hour.

I avail myself of this opportunity etc.

Nevile Henderson

At 11.15 a. m. on the same day Lord Halifax informed the German Chargé d'Affaires in London that Britain regarded a state of war as existing between herself and Germany as from 11 a. m. on 3 September 1939.

Naturally, no other course remained for the Reich Government but to refuse "to be handed, to accept and, still less, to comply with" demands in the nature of ultimata made by the

British Government. In a Memorandum handed to the British Ambassador by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs on 3 September at 11.30 a. m. Germany rejected these demands and once again set forth the German point of view and Britain's responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities, declaring that she would "reply to any act of aggression on the part of Great Britain with the same weapons and in the same way."

No. 97 (479)

Memorandum from the Reich Government, handed to the British Ambassador by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, 3 September 1939, 11.30 a. m.

(Translation)

The Reich Government acknowledges receipt of the British Government's ultimatum of 3 September 1939, to which the Reich Government has the honour to reply as follows:

1. The Reich Government and the German people refuse to be handed, to accept and, still less, to comply with demands amounting to an ultimatum made by the British Government.
2. For many months past a state of war has actually prevailed along our eastern border. Ever since the Treaty of Versailles rent Germany in two, all subsequent German Governments were denied any peaceful settlement. Since 1933, the National Socialist Government have also tried again and again by way of peaceful negotiations to do away with the worst oppression and violations of law perpetrated by that treaty. Primarily it has been the British Government who by their intransigent attitude have frustrated any practical revision. Had it not been for the interference on the part of the British Government, a

reasonable solution, doing justice to both party, would undoubtedly have been arrived at between Germany and Poland, a fact which the Reich Government and the German people are convinced of. For Germany had no intention of destroying Poland, nor did she ever demand Poland's destruction. All that the Reich demanded was the revision of those articles in the Treaty of Versailles which sensible statesmen of all nations, even at the time when the treaty was drawn up, termed unbearable as a permanent solution—unbearable both for a great nation and for the entire political and economic interest of Eastern Europe, and therefore impossible. Even British statesmen declared that the terms which Germany was forced to accept in the East held the seed of future wars. To do away with this danger has been the desire of every German Government, and in particular the aim of the new National-Socialist Government of the German people. The policy of the British Cabinet is to blame for the fact that a peaceful revision has not been reached.

3. The British Government—an unprecedented occurrence in history—have given Poland full power with regard to any action against Germany which she might intend to undertake. The British Government gave the Polish Government the assurance of their military support in any circumstances, in the event of Germany's commencing hostilities in reply to any provocation or attack. Thereupon Polish acts of terror against Germans domiciled in the districts torn from Germany immediately assumed intolerable proportions. The treatment to which the Free City of Danzig was subjected was in contravention to all legal provisions; it was first threatened with economic ruin and submitted to customs restrictions, and finally encircled by military forces and throttled by transport restrictions. Every

one of these infringements of the Danzig Statute was fully known to, and approved by, the British Government, and was backed by the blank cheque given to Poland. The German Government, although greatly distressed by the sufferings of the German minority subjected to atrocities and inhuman treatment by the Poles, nevertheless looked on in patience for five months without once undertaking even the slightest aggressive action of a similar nature against Poland.

Germany merely warned Poland that these actions would not be tolerated in the long run and that she was determined, in the event of no other help forthcoming for the population concerned, to take the matter in hand herself. The British Government were fully aware of all that was going on. It would have been an easy matter for them to use their great influence in Warsaw to exhort those in authority to conform to the laws of justice and humanity, and to fulfil their existing obligations. The British Government did not see fit to do anything of the kind. On the contrary, by constantly emphasizing their duty to assist Poland under all circumstances, they clearly encouraged Poland to continue in her criminal attitude which was endangering the peace of Europe. On these lines the British Government rejected the proposal made by Mussolini which still might have saved the peace of Europe, although the Reich Government had expressed their readiness to accept such proposal. The British Government are thus responsible for all the misery and suffering that has now overtaken, or is about to overtake, so many peoples.

4. Now that all attempts to find and agree upon a peaceful solution have been frustrated owing to the intransigent attitude of the Polish Government as shielded by Great Britain; now that for many months

already conditions similar to civil war on the eastern frontiers of the Reich have gradually, — without any objection on the part of the British Government—, assumed the character of open attacks on Reich territory, the Reich Government have decided to put an end to the continued menace, first to the external, but then also to the internal peace of the German nation, which constituted a situation that no Great Power could be expected to tolerate. In order to defend the peace, the security and the honour of the German Reich, the Reich Government have decided to resort to the only means now left to them, since the Governments of the Democracies have virtually frustrated all other possibilities of a revision. They have replied to the last Polish attacks threatening Reich territory with similar measures. The Reich Government are not willing, on account of any British intentions or obligations, to tolerate in the east of the Reich conditions similar to those prevailing in the British Protectorate of Palestine. The German people, however, is certainly not willing to submit to ill-treatment by Poland.

5. The Reich Government therefore reject any attempt to force Germany, by an ultimative demand, to withdraw her troops, called up for the purpose of protecting the Reich, and thus to put up once more with the former unrest and injustice. The threat that war would otherwise be waged against Germany coincides with the intentions, for many years proclaimed, of numerous British politicians. On innumerable occasions the Reich Government and the German people have assured the British people of their desire for an understanding and even for close friendship with them. If the British Government have hitherto rejected these offers and now reply to them with an

open threat of war, the responsibility for this lies not with the German nation and its Government, but exclusively with the British Cabinet, especially with those men who for years have preached the destruction and extermination of the German people. The German people and the German Government do not intend, as does Great Britain, to rule the world, but they are determined to defend their own freedom, their indepedence and their very life. We take note of the intentions, made known to us by Mr. King Hall on behalf of the British Government, to deal the German nation a still more crushing blow than did the Treaty of Versailles and shall therefore reply to any act of aggression on the part of Great Britain with the same weapons and in the same way.

Berlin, 3 September 1939.

At 12.30 p. m. on the same day, the French Ambassador called at the German Foreign Office and handed over a Note to the effect that the French Government felt themselves in duty bound, to "fulfil the contractual obligations, as from 5 p. m. to-day, 3 September onwards, which they had entered into with Poland", an intimation which differed from the British not only in regard to time but also in regard to contents.

No. 98 (480)

Note handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the French Ambassador, 3 September 1939, 12.20 p. m.

(Translation)

Berlin, 3 September 1939

Your Excellency,

As I received no satisfactory reply from the Reich Government at noon on 3 September to the Note which I handed to

you on 1 September at 10 p. m. I have the honour of making the following communication to you on behalf of my Government:

The Government of the French Republic consider it their duty to remind you for the last time of the grave responsibility which the Reich Government incurred when they opened hostilities against Poland without a declaration of war and did not adopt the proposal of the Governments of the French Republic and that of His Britannic Majesty to desist from every aggressive action against Poland and to declare themselves ready immediately to withdraw their troops from Polish territory.

The Government of the Republic therefore have the honour of informing the Reich Government that they see themselves in duty bound to fulfil the contractual obligations, from today, 3 September 5 p. m. onwards, which they have entered into with Poland and with which the German Government are acquainted.

I have etc. Coulondre

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to Britain's frustration of the attempted mediation by Italy and also to the British ultimatum which set a time limit of two hours and expressed his regret that France should wage an entirely unjustifiable war of aggression against Germany in spite of all efforts to come to an understanding. The responsibility for the suffering brought upon both countries by such a step would rest with the French Government. The conversation which took place between the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs and the French Ambassador when the latter handed over the French Note, is described in a memorandum by Dr. Schmidt.

No. 99 (481)

Conversation of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs with the French Ambassador, 3 September 1939, 12.20 p. m. Memo by Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

When M. Coulondre asked the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he was in a position to give a satisfactory answer to the question contained in the Note handed to him on 1 September at 10 p. m., Herr von Ribbentrop replied that after Great Britain and France had handed over their Notes, a new proposal for mediation had been made by the head of the Italian Government who added that the French Government had consented to this proposal. The previous day Germany had also communicated to the Duce her readiness to consent to the proposal, but later in the day the Duce had informed the German Government that his proposal had been frustrated by the intransigence of the British Government. This morning Britain had sent an ultimatum to Germany with a time limit of two hours. Germany had rejected the demands contained in this ultimatum in a written communication. The reasons for the rejection of the British ultimatum were contained in this document, which he (the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs) handed over to the French Ambassador for his information. Should France's attitude towards Germany be determined by the same considerations as that of the British Government, the German Government could only regret the fact. Germany had always wished for an understanding with France. Should the French Government nevertheless take up a hostile attitude towards Germany by reason of their obligations towards Poland, the German Government would consider this a totally unjustified war of aggression on the part of France against Germany. Germany herself

would refrain from every act of aggression against France. Should France, however, adopt a different attitude, Germany would see herself compelled to reply accordingly.

M. Coulondre replied that he concluded from the statements made by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs that the German Government were not in a position to comply with the suggestion contained in the French Note of 1 September.

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that this was the case.

M. Coulondre then replied that under these circumstances it was his painful duty to draw the attention of the Reich Government once more to the grave responsibility which they had taken upon themselves by the opening of hostilities against Poland without a declaration of war, and to inform them that the French Gouvernment saw themselves compelled to fulfil their obligations towards Poland as from to-day, 3 September 1939 5 p. m. At the same time M. Coulondre handed over a written communication. After having read it, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs added in conclusion that Germany had no intention of attacking France and that the present French Government bore the full responsibility for the suffering which would be brought upon both countries if France attacked Germany.

Schmidt

In a telegraphic communication sent by the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office to the German Diplomatic Representatives, Britain's responsibility for the outbreak of war was finally established.

No. 100 (482)

The State Secretary at the German Foreign Office to the German Diplomatic Representatives Circular by telegraph

(Translation)

Berlin, 3 September 1939

For your information and for your guidance in conversation.

After attempt of direct German-Polish discussion had failed, due to non-appearance of Polish Plenipotentiary in spite of two days' wait on part of German Government, and after we had been forced to answer Polish military encroachment by resorting to military action, Great Britain and France on 1 September demanded of us that we should withdraw German troops from Polish territory. Danger of war, as it seemed, could still be removed by intervention of Mussolini, who proposed armistice and subsequent conference to solve German-Polish conflict. This proposal has been answered in the affirmative by us and also by French Government; British Government, however, to-day, fixing time limit of two hours, repeated demand for withdrawal of German troops, and after this time had elapsed declared themselves at war with Germany. France followed suit by communicating that she saw herself compelled to assist Poland.

Reasonable German-Polish settlement could certainly have been attained long ago without interference on part of Britain and her anti-German policy of encirclement. But instead of urging Poland to give in, Britain gave Poland *carte blanche* against Germany, involved herself in dependence on Poland's decisions and at the last moment even frustrated Mussolini's proposal by her attitude. This is the harvest reaped by those men in Britain who for years have preached Germany's annihilation. This course of events clearly shows Britain's full responsibility for the outbreak of war.

Weizsäcker

Secure in the knowledge that she had, up to the last, done everything in her power to do away with the most recent and most dangerous source of European conflict by peaceful means, Germany finally took up the British challenge. Yet once again, after the Polish campaign in which her armies had, with unparalleled success, performed their appointed task, on 6 October through the words of the Fuehrer, she proposed to the world, including her adversaries, a new order in Europe as a basis for a just and lasting peace. This suggestion, too, was rejected by Britain in a manner which rendered it plain that the British Government were concerned neither with the existence of the Poland which they had incited to war against Germany, nor with the establishment of a new and lasting order in Europe, but only with the defeat and ruin of Germany at all costs. History will pass judgment on both Britain and Germany. May the documentary evidence contained in this volume and selected from the official German White Book play its part in establishing a just verdict.